

Title	Understanding intergenerational activity – exploring the experiences of service-users and volunteers involved with S.H.A.R.E.
Authors	Russell, Miranda
Publication date	2018-09-07
Original Citation	Russell, M. (2018) Understanding intergenerational activity – exploring the experiences of service-users and volunteers involved with S.H.A.R.E.. Cork: Community-Academic Research Links, University College Cork.
Type of publication	Report
Link to publisher's version	https://www.ucc.ie/en/scishop/rr/
Rights	©2018, Miranda Russell.
Download date	2023-05-04 19:54:25
Item downloaded from	http://hdl.handle.net/10468/9274

Understanding intergenerational activity – exploring the experiences of service- users and volunteers involved with **S.H.A.R.E.**

Miranda Russell

CARL Research Project

in collaboration with

S.H.A.R.E.



Name of student(s):	Miranda Russell
Name of civil society organisation/community group:	S.H.A.R.E.
Name of community group liaison person:	Noreen Dorgan
Academic supervisor(s):	Margaret Buckley
Name and year of course:	MScSoc in Community & Voluntary Sector Management. Year 2 (final year)
Date completed:	07/09/2018

What is Community-Academic Research Links?

Community Academic Research Links (CARL) is a community engagement initiative provided by University College Cork to support the research needs of community and voluntary groups/ Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). These groups can be grass roots groups, single issue temporary groups, but also structured community organisations. Research for the CSO is carried out free of financial cost by student researchers.

CARL seeks to:

- provide civil society with knowledge and skills through research and education;
- provide their services on an affordable basis;
- promote and support public access to and influence on science and technology;
- create equitable and supportive partnerships with civil society organisations;
- enhance understanding among policymakers and education and research institutions of the research and education needs of civil society, and
- enhance the transferrable skills and knowledge of students, community representatives and researchers (www.livingknowledge.org).

What is a CSO?

We define CSOs as groups who are non-governmental, non-profit, not representing commercial interests, and/or pursuing a common purpose in the public interest. These groups include: trade unions, NGOs, professional associations, charities, grass-roots organisations, organisations that involve citizens in local and municipal life, churches and religious committees, and so on.

Why is this report on the UCC website?

The research agreement between the CSO, student and CARL/University states that the results of the study must be made public through the publication of the final research report on the CARL (UCC) website. CARL is committed to open access, and the free and public dissemination of research results.

How do I reference this report?

Author (year) *Dissertation/Project Title*, [online], Community-Academic Research Links/University College Cork, Ireland, Available from: <http://www.ucc.ie/en/scishop/completed/> [Accessed on: date].

How can I find out more about the Community-Academic Research Links and the Living Knowledge Network?

The UCC CARL website has further information on the background and operation of Community-Academic Research Links at University College Cork, Ireland. <http://carl.ucc.ie>. You can follow CARL on Twitter at @UCC_CARL. All of our research reports are accessible free online here: <http://www.ucc.ie/en/scishop/rr/>.

CARL is part of an international network of Science Shops called the Living Knowledge Network. You can read more about this vibrant community and its activities on this website: <http://www.scienceshops.org> and on Twitter @ScienceShops. CARL is also a contributor to Campus Engage, which is the Irish Universities Association engagement initiative to promote community-based research, community-based learning and volunteering amongst Higher Education students and staff.

Are you a member of a community project and have an idea for a research project?

We would love to hear from you! Read the background information here <http://www.ucc.ie/en/scishop/ap/c&vo/> and contact us by email at carl@ucc.ie.

Disclaimer

Notwithstanding the contributions by the University and its staff, the University gives no warranty as to the accuracy of the project report or the suitability of any material contained in it for either general or specific purposes. It will be for the Client Group, or users, to ensure that any outcome from the project meets safety and other requirements. The Client Group agrees not to hold the University responsible in respect of any use of the project results. Notwithstanding this disclaimer, it is a matter of record that many student projects have been completed to a very high standard and to the satisfaction of the Client Group.

Understanding Intergenerational Activity

*Exploring the Experience of Service-
users and Volunteers Involved with
S.H.A.R.E.*



Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank my course supervisor, Margaret Buckley, who has been wonderfully supportive. She made a difficult task seem much more achievable with her continuous reassurance and guidance, and she put a lot of time and effort into helping me with the research process. I feel very privileged to have had her as my supervisor.

I would also like to thank all the staff at S.H.A.R.E. for accommodating me during the participatory research process. Everyone at S.H.A.R.E. was so kind and went out of their way to help the interviews run as smoothly as possible. I would also like to acknowledge CARL for their contribution and guidance.

In particular, I would like to thank Noreen Dorgan, who is a coordinator in S.H.A.R.E. Her passion and devotion to both the residents at S.H.A.R.E. and also to the student volunteers is inspiring and refreshing.

I would like to thank the residents who participated in the interview process. Their contribution was invaluable and led to some very interesting findings. They are all amazingly selfless and caring people, who possess a youthful and lively energy, and were a pleasure to work with.

I would like to thank the student volunteers who contributed to the interview process. Their enthusiasm was uplifting, and it was motivating to speak to students who are considerate and conscientious.

Finally, I would also like to express my gratitude to our course coordinator, Féilim Ó'hAdhmaill, who has been supportive, encouraging and always there to assist any students with any problems they may have had.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction.....	6
1.1 Chosen Research Topic.....	6
1.2 Research Aims	6
1.3 Proposed Research Questions	6
1.3.1 Questions for Service Users:	6
1.3.2 Questions for Students:	7
1.4 Rationale	7
1.5 Methodology	8
1.5.1 Steps Taken when Compiling Research.....	8
1.5.2 Selection Process.....	8
1.6 The Interviews	9
1.7 Question Design.....	9
1.8 Analysis of Results	10
1.9 Ethical considerations	10
1.10 Chapter Outlines	11
1.11 Data Sources	11
Chapter 2: Literature Review	13
2.1 Introduction.....	13
2.2 The Impact of Intergenerational Activity	13
2.2.1 The Impact of Intergenerational Activity on Young People	13
2.2.2 The Impact of Intergenerational Activity on Older People.....	15
2.5 The Overall Potential Benefits.....	17
2.6 Possible Pitfalls.....	17
2.7 Conclusion	19
Chapter 3: S.H.A.R.E. – Students Harness Aid for the Relief of the Elderly	21
3.1 S.H.A.R.E. – A Historical Overview	21
3.2 S.H.A.R.E.’s Ethos	21
3.3 S.H.A.R.E.’s Philosophy (S.H.A.R.E., 2017).....	22
3.4 Student Visits.....	22
3.5 Student Profile	22
3.6 Residents	22
3.7 Day-Care Services	23
3.8 Dementia Visitation Period.....	23

Chapter 4: Primary Research Findings	26
4.1 Introduction.....	26
4.1.1 S.H.A.R.E. – A Unique Atmosphere.....	26
4.1.2 The Intergenerational Visits	26
4.1.3 The Interviews.....	27
4.2 What is the impact of intergenerational volunteer activities in a care setting on the student volunteers?	27
4.2.1 The Benefits for Students Involved in Intergenerational Activity	27
4.2.2 Residents Awareness for the Students’ Welfare	29
4.2.3 Potential Challenges for Students	31
4.3 What is the impact of intergenerational volunteer activities in a care setting on service-users?.....	33
4.3.1 The intergenerational activity taking place is not a priority for the residents.....	33
4.3.2 Residents’ Expectations of Teenagers.....	34
4.3.3 The Beneficial Impact for Residents	35
4.3.4 Challenges	39
4.4 What are the potential benefits of this concept for addressing the issue of an ageing population in Ireland?	40
4.4.1 Addressing an Ageing Population and Students’ Social Awareness Development... 40	
4.5 Conclusion	42
Chapter 5: Discussions and Recommendations	45
5.1 Recommendations.....	45
5.1.1 Increase Communication Facilitation.....	45
5.1.2 Involve More Schools	46
5.1.3 Increase Resident Attendance	46
5.1.4 Activities	47
5.1.5 Embrace the Effectiveness of Student Fundraising Capabilities	47
5.2 Conclusions.....	47
5.2.1 Is Intergenerational Activity Beneficial to Both Groups?.....	47
5.2.2 Student Attitudes	48
5.2.3 Connection to the Cause.....	49
5.2.4 Historical Connection.....	49
5.2.5 Addressing an Ageing Population.....	50
5.2.6 Student Development of a Social Conscience.....	50

Bibliography	52
Appendices	54
APPENDIX A: Consent Information Sheet.....	54
APPENDIX B: Student Consent Form.....	57
APPENDIX C: Resident Consent Form	58
APPENDIX D: Ethics Application Form	59
APPENDIX E: Sample Interview Transcript	68



Chapter 1

Introduction



Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Chosen Research Topic

This research intends to conceptualise an understanding of intergenerational activity by examining the relationship between youth volunteers and older people in society, who are currently engaging in an intergenerational programme. The engagement analysed is facilitated by the organisation S.H.A.R.E. whose acronym stands for Students Harness Aid for the Relief of the Elderly.

1.2 Research Aims

This research aims to identify the impact that intergenerational activity has on both S.H.A.R.E.'s service-users and student volunteers. It should clarify if both age-groups are satisfied with their intergenerational experience and if they feel they benefit from taking part, for example socially or through gaining new skills.

It also aspires to ascertain the potential of intergenerational activity in increasing levels of understanding and respect between older and younger people, including potential to combat stereotyping and ageism.

Finally, this research aims to identify if intergenerational activity can alleviate some concerns attached to Ireland's ageing population.

1.3 Proposed Research Questions

1.3.1 Questions for Service Users:

1. Do you look forward to the students' visits? *If yes, what aspects of the visits do you enjoy the most?*
2. Do you think that you would meet other residents in the community room if the students were not visiting?
3. What activities do you do with the students?
4. Have you learned more about using new technology from the students and if so do you value these skills?
5. In general, what do you talk to the students about?
6. Do you compare when you were a teenager with their experiences nowadays?
7. Do you think that the students find the visits beneficial?
8. Do you find that friendships form over the course of the year with the students and has a stronger friendship developed since initial visits?
9. Do you have any suggestions on how S.H.A.R.E.'s services could be improved?

1.3.2 Questions for Students:

1. Why did you decide to volunteer with S.H.A.R.E.?
2. What does it mean for you to participate in these visits?
3. Do you think that this is an important service? *If yes, why?*
4. Do you enjoy the visits?
5. Do you think that this experience would motivate you to volunteer with S.H.A.R.E. in the future? Or maybe in a similar sector?
6. Do you find that being associated with an organisation like S.H.A.R.E. around the Christmas period raises your awareness of those who are in need as opposed to the thinking about the more commercial aspects of this holiday?
7. Has your initial perception of intergenerational experiences changed since you started volunteering here? Or is it how you imagined it would be?
8. Do you feel that the visits benefit you as well as the service-users? *If yes, in what way?*
9. Do you find that you develop friendships with other students in your group? *If yes, why do you think these friendships develop?*
10. Do you have any suggestions on how S.H.A.R.E.'s services could be improved?

1.4 Rationale

There is little research carried out to-date examining the impact of younger and older peoples' interactions within the voluntary and community sector. This research is interdisciplinary and will contribute to various sectors.

Firstly, it will contribute to youth development research as it will demonstrate the value achieved by younger citizens through volunteering in an intergenerational setting.

Secondly, it will impact the field of social gerontology by formulating an understanding of the social and psychological aspects of ageing.

Finally, this research intends to influence national policy due to the National Positive Ageing Strategy objective to develop intergenerational education programmes. It could potentially accelerate progression in this area.

Overall S.H.A.R.E. will benefit from capturing the outcomes of their services in the form of academic research. This study will emphasize the potential of adopting S.H.A.R.E.'s approach and will demonstrate the value of this organisation's societal services within their community. It should also expand upon the current perceived value that S.H.A.R.E. delivers, by publishing the less considered benefits experienced by student volunteers.

Due to the lack of community and voluntary sector research in intergenerational activity, this research should be of international importance.

1.5 Methodology

There are two relevant groups who will contribute to this research project – the student volunteers and S.H.A.R.E.'s service-users. The research intends to establish the motivations and experiences of both groups. Whilst it is expected that the motivations for participation will be different for both parties the aim is to draw conclusion of what both demographics perceive they have achieved from their experience.

The objective will be to determine what students feel they are contributing to service-users' experiences but additionally whether they themselves feel they have benefited from the experience. The research will then evaluate service-users' satisfaction with S.H.A.R.E.'s services and will extend to examine whether they feel they contribute positively to the student volunteers' experiences.

1.5.1 Steps Taken when Compiling Research

All the research gathered in this project was obtained through a qualitative approach by conducting one-to-one interviews. This facilitated more in-depth findings regarding the benefits of intergenerational activity.

Focus groups were initially considered for gathering information however one-to-one interviews were decided upon due to the risk of participants being excluded in a focus group set-up. Additionally, participants may feel more comfortable giving their opinions with less people present and will be less likely to modify their answers. It is also more difficult to guarantee anonymity in a group-interview setting as there are other participants present.

Potential issues were considered such as ethical considerations as detailed below. Another issue considered was ensuring that the moderator could control the interview process, by limiting deviation from the intended topic, which was achieved by having a predetermined direction and the ability to guide the discussion effectively.

1.5.2 Selection Process

S.H.A.R.E. assisted with the selection process and communicated with residents to request volunteers to participate in the interviews. Students were asked to volunteer, and their names were randomly selected from a hat. All interviewees selected were from the same centre in order to obtain consistent findings. To achieve a balanced outcome, an equal number of students and residents were interviewed.

This year's students were interviewed to gain up-to-date insight to volunteers' experiences therefore ethical approval was required as some students were under-18¹. Additionally, it was easier to access current volunteers as data protection regulation prevents storage of past volunteers' details.

If ethical approval was not granted, UCC students would have been contacted to request participation from previous volunteers who now attend UCC².

1.6 The Interviews

Six people were interviewed, three students and three residents, with each cohort interviewed to gain insight into both demographics' experiences.

Six candidates were chosen as fewer would not give the required variety for a generalizable overview of participants' experiences and a larger number would make it difficult to get the necessary detail to answer the research questions.

The interviews were conducted on S.H.A.R.E.'s premises, away from day-time activities occurring, to ensure privacy. Interviews were recorded and transcribed afterwards. Additional notes were taken to document any facial expressions or body language that would not be evident on an audio recording.

1.7 Question Design

Nine questions³ were designed for service-users aiming to decipher the nature of the intergenerational visits, what activities take place, and whether these activities are equally enjoyed by both age-groups. The questions were designed to clarify what level of engagement takes place and how much of a friendship is developed over the year. There were questions to ascertain if the residents are socially benefitting and if they are learning from the students. It was also asked if residents consider the students' wellbeing and whether they feel they benefit from taking part.

Overall, the questions helped to identify if the residents enjoy the intergenerational activity and whether they are happy with the services at S.H.A.R.E.

¹ Student volunteers for S.H.A.R.E.'s intergenerational activities are fifth year school students therefore are most likely going to be under the age of 18.

² See Appendix D for Research Ethics Application form.

³ Questions for service-users and students are listed in the "Proposed Research Questions" section within the introduction chapter.

Ten questions were designed for student volunteers, some with similar objectives to the residents' questions, such as what level of communication takes place, if they enjoy the visits, whether they feel a friendship is formed, and whether they believe S.H.A.R.E.'s services are working well. Additionally, students were asked if they feel they have benefitted from the experience and in what way. They were asked if their initial perception of intergenerational activity was altered from their engagement with residents. They were also asked about what the programme means to them, if their social awareness has increased from taking part and whether they feel the programme is important.

Due to the relatively high volume of people interviewed, questions were designed to be reasonably close-ended.

1.8 Analysis of Results

After interviews were transcribed, they were re-analysed with a focus on emerging themes relevant to proposed research questions. The answers to these questions contributed to the majority of the paper's discussions/findings and formed a conclusion for this study.

On analysing the audio recordings, interviewees' body language and tones of voices were considered when writing up findings.

1.9 Ethical considerations

The principal ethical issue in conducting this nature of research was the contribution from students who are under-18. S.H.A.R.E. assisted in obtaining required Garda vetting and ethical approval to interview this age-group.

Voluntary participation, informed consent, freedom from harm and provision of confidentiality/anonymity are all relevant aspects of ethical research procedures that must be considered prior to engaging with research participants (Ethics in Research, n.d).

All participants must contribute voluntarily and should be advised that they may withdraw at any stage.

Participants were provided with informed consent forms to complete before the research was conducted. Consent forms for under-aged participants were signed by the participant and a S.H.A.R.E. coordinator⁴.

If any aspect of the research process caused distress to participants, ethical considerations would have been reviewed again, and measures would have been taken to ensure the person experiencing distress received appropriate support.

⁴ A S.H.A.R.E. coordinator was present during the interviews of under-aged students for ethical reasons however this coordinator wore earphones and listened to music to protect the students' privacy.

All survey participants were guaranteed anonymity.

1.10 Chapter Outlines

This project will consist of five chapters commencing with an introductory chapter, which will include the research methodology section. The second chapter will be a literature review examining studies relevant to intergenerational activity and an ageing population.

The third chapter will contain an overview of S.H.A.R.E.

The fourth chapter will consist of the primary research data collected and the findings associated with this data.

The concluding chapter will provide discussions regarding primary research findings and will compare these with the original research aims proposed in the introductory chapter.

Finally, there will be a bibliography and a final section containing any relevant appendices.

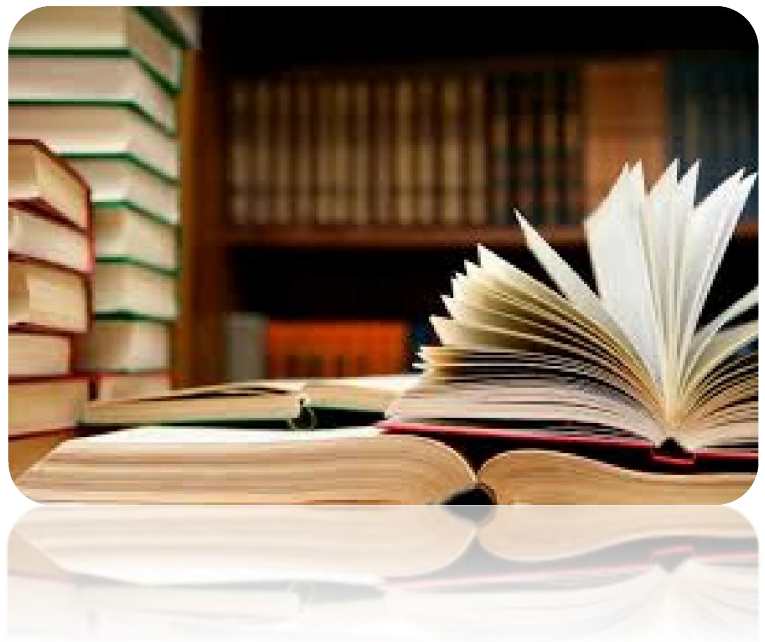
1.11 Data Sources

Primary data was collected from first-hand information gathered from service-users and volunteers at S.H.A.R.E.

Secondary data was obtained from similar studies and journal articles relevant to this study to support and expand upon primary findings.

Chapter 2

Literature Review



Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This literature review will be a thematic review of relevant resources, focusing on the three main research questions established in this paper, with the analysis focusing on intergenerational activity sources. This chapter will firstly look at findings of previous studies concerning the impact of intergenerational activity on older and younger age-groups and will continue to determine benefits that have emerged from this concept. Finally, any potential pitfalls that may be linked to this activity will be identified.

2.2 The Impact of Intergenerational Activity

Finn and Scharf (2012) carried out a study, through NUIG⁵, in 2012, examining intergenerational programmes in Ireland, and the development of this concept at that time. The report was undertaken in collaboration with three organisations that were committed to developing intergenerational practices in Ireland⁶. Their paper acknowledges emerging global recognition of positive outcomes of intergenerational activity on individuals, communities and societies (Finn and Scharf, 2012, p.4).

Intergenerational is described here as an activity that (Finn and Scharf, 2012, p.4):

Aims to bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities which promote greater understanding and respect between generations and contributes to building more cohesive communities. Intergenerational practice is inclusive, building on the positive resources that the young and old have to offer each other and those around them.

(Beth Johnson Foundation, 2001).

2.2.1 The Impact of Intergenerational Activity on Young People

Referring again to Finn and Scharf's (2012) study through NUIG, they identified 20 intergenerational projects taking place in Ireland at the time. Four projects, one in Louth, one in Cork and two in Galway are discussed briefly below.

⁵ National University of Ireland Galway

⁶ The collaborating organisations were the Irish Centre for Social Gerontology (ICSG), Age Action and the Beth Johnson Foundation

In county Louth, both younger and older people identified a need to change their attitudes towards the other age-group, and launched a project, Louth County Council - An Age Friendly County, to change these attitudes. Participants of all ages thoroughly enjoyed this project (Finn and Scharf, 2012, p.13).

A study on intergenerational activity in Galway, Changing Generations, produced evidence suggesting intergenerational conflict would be inevitable in the future if intergenerational solidarity is not achieved in Ireland, identifying a need for this cohesion by both groups (Finn and Scharf, 2012, pp.20-21).

Galway felt its community was diminishing so founders designed a project, Living Scenes, to combat this. This project focused on developing intergenerational connections between local schools and older generations, allowing both groups to express their societal needs, which the programme then responded to (Finn and Scharf, 2012, p.22).

This project, alongside the Louth project, acknowledges a decrease in community and family values, referencing close relationships with grandparents not being as pertinent as in the past⁷ (Carroll, 2011). The project founders discussed the values that may be lost by this decreasing tendency to be close to one's grandparents in Ireland, highlighting the benefits of encouraging intergenerational friendships (Surlis, 2009). This project affirms how both age-groups benefit equally from this interaction and both thoroughly enjoy taking part⁸ (Finn and Scharf, 2012, p.22).

A group in Cork noticed a lack of intergenerational interaction in the county and sought to combat stereotyping and ageism, and to form mutual respect amongst both age-groups, through the start-up of an intergenerational photography club. This tendency to negatively stereotype was identified in both age-groups, highlighting how both groups benefit from the formation of mutual respect (Finn and Scharf, 2012, p.36).

By providing this overview of intergenerational projects in Ireland, Finn and Scharf (2012) have demonstrated how both age-groups equally enjoy and benefit from intergenerational activity, with mutual respect and value gained by both groups.

⁷ This distance is attributed to grandparents being less likely to live with their children and grandchildren due to emigration and increased labour market participation resulting in lower rates of family-care provision.

⁸ There is a long waiting list for schools to take part in this programme, highlighting its popularity.

2.2.2 The Impact of Intergenerational Activity on Older People

As previously emphasised above, older people in Ireland have benefited from engaging in intergenerational activity, in a similar manner that young participants have, resulting in transformed attitudes and the formation of mutual respect. However, there are additional interesting impacts on older participants as outlined below.

The RCSI⁹ and TCD¹⁰ have released results from TILDA¹¹, publishing a study that provides a relevant overview of the current supports available to older people in Ireland¹². It also provides a description of physical and mental health patterns of older people, with possible reasons for these issues suggested. It provides an overview of current unmet needs and includes solutions to potential issues, whilst highlighting the increasing ageing population in Ireland, demanding more supports are introduced to address this¹³ (Barrett et al., 2011, p.217).

Barrett et al. identify a more urgent outcome of an ageing population to be a rising need for community-based health and social-care services, suggesting S.H.A.R.E.'s residential services should increase in demand. They also call for a shift from current older carers, and family member care-provision, to be realised through a change in policy (Barrett et al., 2011, p.217). Barret et al. refer to two issues experienced by older generations that can be combatted, or alleviated, by S.H.A.R.E.'s intergenerational programme; negative mental health and a poor quality of life experienced by older generations.

2.3 Mental Health

Barrett et al. (2011) acknowledge the rapidly rising ageing population in Ireland, and highlight the negative factors associated with poor mental health in later life. They also describe the consequences of not addressing these issues.

The authors seek to draw attention to the importance of understanding and monitoring mental health for older people. They identify causes of poor mental health for this age-group, including low levels of labour participation and higher rates of disability. They also identify factors that can easily be modified such as sleep quality and engaging in exercise (Barrett et al., 2011, p.180).

⁹ The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland

¹⁰ Trinity College Dublin

¹¹ The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing

¹² This study looked at people over the age of 50.

¹³It should be noted that the authors attribute this need for increased support to worsening health issues, as opposed to the changing age structure of the country.

This study found that in Ireland 6% of older women and 7% of older men are socially isolated (Barrett et al., 2011, p.3). The authors established that 11% of the older population in Ireland report their mental health to be fair or poor, with men reporting higher levels of negative mental health than women. They also found that sub-threshold/minor depression rates increase steadily with advancing age (Barrett et al., 2011, p.60).

The study found that participation in leisure activities resulted in more positive levels of physical and mental health amongst older people, whilst loneliness was linked to negative mental and physical health. The study also states that women visit family and friends more, and visits increase for both sexes with age (Barrett et al., 2011, p.3). The conclusion drawn here is that quality of life for older people increases with greater social interaction and with the formation of positive social relationships.

S.H.A.R.E.'s intergenerational activity provides social interaction, formation of friendships, and an opportunity to engage in activities with others, which have been identified above as factors that improve the growing concern of negative mental health experienced by older generations.

2.4 Quality of Life

Barrett et al. advise that it is the increasing ageing population in Ireland that has resulted in greater interest in achieving higher levels of positive well-being in later life. They outline the most important aspects of positive ageing as being physical health and functioning, psychological wellbeing, and social functioning and participation. This paper found that lower quality of life for older people was linked to greater age, lower levels of education and wealth, and a poor self-perceived health status¹⁴ (Barrett et al., 2011, p.266).

As discussed in a later chapter, S.H.A.R.E.'s intergenerational activities will not overcome physical health, or more complex mental health, concerns however they do offer a solution to improving levels of social functioning and participation, and are likely to improve psychological wellbeing, as this is linked to socialising and community engagement. Weintraub and Killian (2007) refer to the importance of activity and independence for upcoming ageing, baby-boomer generations, suggesting current nursing care facilities will not meet their expectations, and evolved needs (Weintraub and Killian, 2007, pp.381-382).

¹⁴ It should be noted that this study found that the majority of older people viewed their quality of life as high.

2.5 The Overall Potential Benefits

There were several benefits that stood out as being generalizable from the Irish intergenerational projects examined.

Firstly, these activities address the issue of a diminishing community sector. Some of the projects were started as a solution to dwindling community interaction and values and resulted in positive gains for all stakeholders.

Secondly, as referenced above, family ties are weaker than in the past due to emigration and higher labour market participation, resulting in less family care-provision (Surlis, 2009). This means that intergenerational interaction is lower than it was in the past, and intergenerational projects actively counteract this.

Thirdly, some intergenerational projects examined in Finn and Scharf's (2012) study found that younger and older generations had negative attitudes towards one another, and that mutual respect was lacking (Finn and Scharf, 2012, pp.21-71). These intergenerational projects overcame these issues, demonstrating that encouraging intergenerational activity combats negative stereotyping and ageism.

Finally, as revealed in Finn and Scharf's (2012) overview of these intergenerational projects, both age-groups can be seen to be learning from their intergenerational experiences (Finn and Scharf, 2012, pp.21-67). Examples of learning included developing new skills together, learning from each other and gaining awareness of different types of intelligence. The experience resulted in gaining new communication skills and benefiting by developing coping mechanisms, emphasised by one project facilitating participants to learn from people living with communication disabilities (Finn and Scharf, 2012, p.56).

Each age-group offered distinct skills, such as younger generations helping older people with technology (Finn and Scharf, 2012, p.63), and older people sharing their life experience with younger generations. Empowerment, pride and new feelings of self-worth were all outcomes identified by stakeholders in these examined intergenerational projects (Finn and Scharf, 2012).

2.6 Possible Pitfalls

A case study carried out in Texas, USA, examining intergenerational activity between residents of an assisted living centre and a local Girl-Scout group, identified some potential pitfalls associated with intergenerational activity which are worth noting.

Firstly, this study warns of the potential negative outcomes of intergenerational activity impeding residents' privacy and boundaries. Biggs and Knox (2014) advise that if the intergenerational activities take place on-site in day-care centres, this may disrupt residents and lead to complaints (Biggs and Knox, 2014, p.55).

In relation to showing respect for residents' boundaries, Biggs and Knox (2014) identified issues in this area where residents were negatively affected by intergenerational activity occurring. The coordinators discussed this with participating youths and there have been no issues since then (Biggs and Knox, 2014, p.64).

Weintraub and Killian (2007) undertook a U.S. study examining the perceptions of recipients of adult day services, where intergenerational programming was offered, regarding their opinion of the impact this intergenerational activity had on their emotional wellbeing (Weintraub and Killian, 2007, p.370).

This study found older participants of intergenerational activity must be able to freely choose their level of involvement in order to feel respected and in control. S.H.A.R.E.'s intergenerational programme is voluntary to all involved, however residents may feel their community room is being invaded and that their freedom is in some way curtailed (Weintraub and Killian, 2007, p.382).

Another critique Biggs and Knox (2014) included was that some residents complained about a lack of meaningful interaction (Biggs and Knox, 2014, p.55), which was also mentioned by a resident of S.H.A.R.E., and will be expanded upon at a later stage.

From the younger participants' perspective, negative impacts that were a concern for the parents of this age-group included the effect it may have on the children if they witnessed residents in pain, suffering from dementia or if a resident they were close to passed away (Biggs and Knox, 2014, p.64). This concern is more relevant when referring to young children therefore it should not be a concern for S.H.A.R.E., as participating students are older. Additionally, S.H.A.R.E. provides valuable training and education to young people about the effects of dementia, which is important knowledge to have.

An interesting point mentioned by Biggs and Knox (2014) was that older participants benefitted from feeling needed when engaging in intergenerational activity, for example if it meant they were providing childcare (Biggs and Knox, 2014, p.58). This stresses the importance of

intergenerational activity avoiding the perception of being out of pity, one-sided, and solely in aid of older participants.

2.7 Conclusion

The two main works referenced here were Finn and Scharf's overview of intergenerational projects in Ireland and Barret et al.'s study on ageing. The reason for this focus was that these examples were developed in Ireland, allowing for a more relevant comparison to the activities of S.H.A.R.E. Finn and Scharf provide an extensive variety of intergenerational projects to examine and Barret et al. give a detailed insight into the problems associated with an ageing population in Ireland.

Finn and Scharf's overview of intergenerational projects in Ireland was a very useful resource for obtaining an overview of benefits and results of intergenerational projects and gave real insight into how successful and popular these programmes can be. This gives a very positive indication of the prospective potential of intergenerational projects in overcoming emerging societal issues, such as facilitating community and intergenerational engagement. However, Finn and Scharf's analysis lacks the required depth that this paper intends to cover, due to its preliminary nature.

Whilst Barret et al. provide a thorough background and detailed information on health and quality of life of older generations, their findings lack the focus that this research intends to take regarding linking positive ageing to intergenerational activity and social inclusion.

Chapter 3

S.H.A.R.E. – Students Harness
Aid for the Relief of the Elderly



Chapter 3: S.H.A.R.E. – Students Harness Aid for the Relief of the Elderly

S.H.A.R.E. is a charitable organisation that provides sheltered housing and a range of services to at-risk elderly people in Cork City. Founded in the 1970s by a group of students, S.H.A.R.E. continues to harness the talents of secondary school students, through interaction with residents, and developing their social conscience.

3.1 S.H.A.R.E. – A Historical Overview

S.H.A.R.E. was initially formed from the energy and revolt that young people in the 1960s were experiencing in Ireland. Students began repairing dilapidated housing for the elderly poor in Cork City, and then transitioned to fundraising activities in order to build capital to expand their services. In 1986, S.H.A.R.E. appointed three trustees in order to be deemed an official charitable organisation, as fundraising became a priority.

Overall S.H.A.R.E. has always been about students volunteering their time and efforts to improving quality of life for older people in Cork. Student participation has transformed over the years from a more physical approach, to the current intergenerational interactions that take place in S.H.A.R.E. centres. The organisation raises awareness amongst younger generations of the burden of loneliness and isolation felt by the elderly poor (S.H.A.R.E., 2017).

3.2 S.H.A.R.E.'s Ethos

S.H.A.R.E. values respect and dignity, which is embedded in their operations, and is why intergenerational activity is such an important part of what they offer.

The organisation has always been based upon the formation of friendship and respect between the young and old, established through sharing experiences and wisdom (S.H.A.R.E., 2017). Respect given from both parties is vital for a meaningful and worthwhile relationship to be formed between the two generations.

Dignity is greatly important to S.H.A.R.E., as their services enable older people to independently live in conditions that allow them to retain their dignity. Coordinators facilitate independent living, so that residents can remain in their homes, but have access to support and social opportunities. S.H.A.R.E. coordinators do not get involved only unless they are approached by residents, to ensure service-users retain their dignity and independence.

Another key goal for S.H.A.R.E. is the promotion of values and awareness amongst younger people by enabling them to develop their social conscience (S.H.A.R.E., 2017). S.H.A.R.E. values the meaningfulness attached to intergenerational activity for students and aims for students to benefit and develop from this interaction.

3.3 S.H.A.R.E.'s Philosophy (S.H.A.R.E., 2017)

1. *Harnessing the giftedness of the young and the old.*
2. *The importance of values and attitudes.*
3. *The dignity of the human being/social awareness.*
4. *Caring service leading to friendship and solidarity.*
5. *Development of self-confidence and self-belief*

3.4 Student Visits

Intergenerational visits are held in S.H.A.R.E. community rooms every Wednesday during the school year. This is for safety reasons, but also to encourage the development of a community presence in the centres. In general, some complexes are more engaging than others.

The visits generally consist of two students engaging with one resident, with four sets of two students per centre.

3.5 Student Profile

A S.H.A.R.E. coordinator describes the students as being good people, who are very selfless, which motivates them to volunteer with S.H.A.R.E. This coordinator explains that there is significant commitment required for this intergenerational programme and that the students give a lot of their time to S.H.A.R.E. They refer to the student participation and engagement as a very important aspect of S.H.A.R.E. and the reason for the visits being a success.

This coordinator describes how students always get a lot out of the experience and meet other students with similar goals and values.

3.6 Residents

S.H.A.R.E.'s centres have 140 single occupancy units, with apartments containing a living area, with a bed, and a separate kitchen and bathroom. There is a day-care centre in S.H.A.R.E.'s main centre which provides cooked meals, but apart from this service, residents look after their own cooking.

Residents must be over 60 years of age and be on the city council housing list, or paying rent to the city council, and must not have means to support themselves. They cannot own a property or be in a position where they can rent privately. Residents also come from homeless services, council properties, or properties that may no longer be appropriate to meet their needs. Examples of this would be tenants with mobility issues living in council properties that are, for example, on a hill, or tenants living in dilapidated properties.

3.7 Day-Care Services

S.H.A.R.E.'s day-care centre is open Monday to Friday and has capacity for 25 people. There is a subsidised charge of €12 per day to attend the day-care centre, regardless of attendees' means. There is a taxi service available to collect service-users from their homes.

Day-care service-users are usually advised to attend by a public-healthcare nurse or their GP. About 20% of live-in residents attend the day-care services, and this is available to all residents.

The day-care service aims to help those at risk of social exclusion, and to provide respite to families providing care. Social exclusion could be caused by a lack of family support or by loneliness caused by family members being out at work during the day.

Day-care services offer a full-time nurse on site, a chiropodist, a hairdresser, and a psychiatric nurse, who is on-site two days per week. Psychiatric services are in place to maintain positive mental health or to improve negative mental health, or to help with addiction support for some service-users.

The interviews conducted in this study suggested there are mental health concerns amongst S.H.A.R.E.'s residents, which prevent them from socialising and attending intergenerational visits. The opportunity to see a psychiatric nurse should help to address this issue.

3.8 Dementia Visitation Period¹⁵

S.H.A.R.E. recently introduced a new programme for people experiencing dementia. This programme has 56 students involved on executive from 21 schools. The visits are in the community centre with service-users coming from the local community. The visits consist of 2 students and 1 vetted adult. The visits are dual-purpose - they provide respite to families and company for services-users. It also educates and raises awareness of dementia amongst younger

¹⁵ Training and information are provided to students about dementia before the visits start.

generations, which will benefit them in their own families and communities. This programme can be challenging for students, more so than the intergenerational visits, as some patients are non-verbal.

Chapter 4

Primary Research Findings



Chapter 4: Primary Research Findings

4.1 Introduction

This section describes the findings from interviews held with participants of S.H.A.R.E.'s intergenerational visits, from the perspectives of both student volunteers and residents.

The aim of this chapter is to create an overview of the effectiveness of intergenerational activity, with a specific focus on the benefits and challenges associated with the programme. The findings provide insight into the experiences of both the students and the residents, and the programme's potential for addressing an ageing population in Ireland. It is important to note that this is specific to this year's group therefore some of the findings cannot be generalised.

This chapter will begin with an overview of S.H.A.R.E.'s intergenerational activity and the specific student-resident gatherings that occur. There will also be a brief description of the structure of the interviews that transpired. There will then be a section describing the impact of the programme for both students and residents. Next, it will continue with an analysis of the future potential of this programme to address an ageing population in Ireland, and its effect on the students' social awareness development. Finally, there will be a conclusion to the section.

4.1.1 S.H.A.R.E. – A Unique Atmosphere

Intergenerational activity is a cornerstone of S.H.A.R.E.'s makeup and differentiates them from other third-sector bodies serving older citizens. Generally speaking, it seems that young people have a rejuvenating effect on older age-groups, who enjoy socialising. It is important that older people, particularly those who are isolated or without family support, have secure and continuous interaction and activity, for positive mental health.

On visiting S.H.A.R.E., there is a lively, social environment with people of all ages in the main centre which creates a diverse, social atmosphere. In comparison with other residential homes, S.H.A.R.E. has a noticeably cheerier feel to it, and appears to be less institutionalised in nature than similar services.

4.1.2 The Intergenerational Visits

The S.H.A.R.E. centre in question would usually accommodate about 25 to 30 residents, with around 4 to 8 attending the intergenerational visits, however, a much higher number of residents attended at the start of the programme. There are around 7 to 9 students who visit this centre, therefore students usually outnumber residents.

The students visit weekly and stay for about an hour and a half. The visit is split into two 45-minute blocks, with the first block consisting of playing pool and the second playing bingo. Visits used to consist of two students engaging with one resident but this year they are less structured, and the students and residents liaise freely.

4.1.3 The Interviews

Even in the early stages of interviewing, common themes were immediately evident which resulted in more generalizable findings.

A worthwhile point noted during the interviews was an evident socio-economic contrast between the students and residents. The students interviewed most likely came from more affluent circumstances and would all most likely continue to university. The residents of S.H.A.R.E. have come from a background where they were at high risk of becoming homeless and are without family support.

4.2 What is the impact of intergenerational volunteer activities in a care setting on the student volunteers?

4.2.1 The Benefits for Students Involved in Intergenerational Activity

4.2.1.1 Social Bonds Formed between Students

The students participating in S.H.A.R.E.'s intergenerational activity are greatly benefiting from a social perspective; however, this is predominantly achieved through friendships developed with other volunteers. This social development is formed during the visits and through additional associated events such as barbecues, parties and fundraising collections.

Student 3 says their group spend a lot of time together outside of school and they have become very close. This student does not attend the same school as most participating students and would not have met these students if it was not for S.H.A.R.E. Additionally, students who do attend the same school said their friendships were strengthened from taking part.

Student 3 believed that they particularly bonded as they possessed shared values, interests and personalities. The collections had the strongest bonding effect for this student who added that the close friendships observed at the collections motivate students to volunteer with S.H.A.R.E.

4.2.1.2 The Student Group

The group dynamic of student volunteers seems a highly important aspect of the experience for participating students. All three students advised the experience was valuable to

them because of their group and mentioned that they would do this experience again, but it would have to be with the same group. This group is particularly close, with one student referring to it as “*an exclusive club*”. This strongly suggests that the priority for the students is their social experience with other volunteers rather than friendships developed with the residents.

Student 1 mentions that they do not feel like they missed out on anything social by spending time volunteering with S.H.A.R.E. as all their friends were involved, adding that classmates who had not signed up regretted it. Having originally felt it might be an inconvenience to volunteer they have concluded it was actually very worthwhile.

There is a perception of status and superiority displayed by the students which does not quite identify with the purpose of the intergenerational programme. However, it is evident that the students are not aware that they convey this impression. Perhaps they have not reached a level of maturity where they have developed a comprehensive understanding of the purpose of the visits.

By sharing their extensive enjoyment of the programme there are now far more volunteers for next year’s cycle. This does raise the question of whether the motivation for joining S.H.A.R.E. is to engage in intergenerational activity or for a more social aspect. The increased desire felt by prospective student volunteers to participate may lack the intended motivation which S.H.A.R.E. aspires to. From another perspective, the increased volunteer pool should benefit S.H.A.R.E. regardless of the reasons for volunteering.

4.2.1.3 Social Bonds Formed with the Residents

All of the students said they hear interesting and entertaining stories from the residents and find them unexpectedly lively, youthful and funny. They mention that the residents seem closer in age to them than they would have originally thought, which suggests this intergenerational activity is altering young peoples’ pre-conceived perceptions of older people.

Student 2 talked about how it was nice chatting to the residents, mentioning that they are impartial and therefore easier to talk to. Student 3 says the visits are a break from school and study pressures as opposed to a strain. This student is also sad that the visits are ending.

However, this year’s students do not appear to have built trust or achieved open communication in their engagement with the residents, as the residents are reluctant to share stories about their lives and their past. The lack of profound engagement also suggests that the students are not developing intergenerational communication skills.

Nonetheless, students may be gaining valuable life skills from the residents. Student 2 contemplated how they pick up little things from the residents that do not seem important at the time, but upon reflection at a later stage, find it valuable. Student 1 refers to learning new pool skills from one of the residents also.

On the whole, the students approach the intergenerational visits with a very pleasant attitude and are appreciative of the residents' company. Any air of superiority seems unintentional and possibly stems from a lack of fully-formed social awareness.

4.2.1.4 Pride and Responsibility

Students demonstrate a sense of responsibility, prestige and pride in their actions when they discuss fundraising for S.H.A.R.E. at the annual Christmas collection event.

Student 1 mentions the experience, which was a clear highlight for them, emphasising "the yellow jacket" a couple of times and the areas of Cork city that they were responsible for. This student thrived under the pressure from S.H.A.R.E. to meet targets. Student 3 refers to the yellow jacket as "*a status symbol*". This student also discusses a sense of pride and importance experienced from being part of the collections.

The students mentioned several times that this was the only fundraising drive for S.H.A.R.E. for the year, demonstrating awareness and taking ownership regarding how their performance will impact on the organisation's financial security. The students' motivation and determination to perform well at collections could be a valuable indication that S.H.A.R.E.'s policy of holding large annual drives helps to avoid volunteer burnout.

This experience has certainly increased students' commitment to S.H.A.R.E. with some students visiting the residents after their year had ended. It also appears to give teenagers a sense of importance and worth, facilitating focus on engagement, collaboration and hard-work to achieve goals.

The favouring of the fundraising aspect of the programme may stem from the social enjoyment of being out with the other volunteers and the prestige attached to this event.

4.2.2 Residents Awareness for the Students' Welfare

Resident 1 teaches the students new skills in pool and finds this enjoyable. This resident refers to the activities as being fun for the students and clearly has concerns about their

amusement. This resident suggests games they might like and provides little treats for winning bingo to maintain their interest.

This resident (1) feels the time allocated is appropriate as any more would put too much pressure on the students. They acknowledge that even though the students changing each year is hard, it is more important that they focus on their studies for final year.

This resident demonstrates great concern for the students' general wellbeing and their satisfaction with their visits to S.H.A.R.E. and predominantly appears to prioritise the students' enjoyment over their own.

Resident 2 worries about being overly critical or overbearing and tries to relate to the students and to accept them for who they are. Despite being critical of the students this resident says they show them love and acceptance so that they can have a break from the competitive nature of life. They refer to there being more to life than grades, displaying empathy for the pressures that teenagers face.

Resident 2 repeatedly suggests wanting to help the students. This aspiration varied from offering a past student studying tips for school to another student from a previous year who was being bullied, was able to bond with the residents and used it as an escape from the school environment and a safe place to confide in others. This resident obviously cared for this student and appreciated their friendship. It sounds like the student in question benefited greatly from this interaction also.

As this resident is clearly a caring person, who feels empathy for those in difficulty, it may actually cause this resident distress to witness students with problems. They want to help them but then refer to a barrier in doing so resulting in a constrained friendship. They describe how it is not an appropriate environment to get involved, so when students open up to this resident about issues, they feel restricted which stunts the friendship.

Resident 2 also feels that the students will not benefit as much from the experience if they are organised as a closed, less diverse group. This resident feels the students will benefit from interacting with different generations, as opposed to solely mixing with their own age or social group.

Two of the three residents interviewed referred to the potential benefits for students in comparing previous generations who had less, and had less social pressure, as being a possible benefit for

present-day teenagers. This being said, none of the residents do so, pointing to some issues in communicating with the students this year.

4.2.3 Potential Challenges for Students

4.2.3.1 Time Pressure for Studying

Two of the three students interviewed felt slight pressure as the collection period coincided with Christmas exams.

Student 1 mentioned it is stressful at Christmas time with exams and pressure from collections as it is the only fundraising drive for the year. Student 3 referred to the collections being scheduled to suit one particular school and advised that they clash with the Christmas exams of other schools participating. This student's school accommodated them, but their mind was on the collections (a sense of guilt for the other collectors) during their exams which was distracting.

Student 3 stated that overall volunteering does not put pressure on them but if the activity was increased it would.

4.2.3.2 Lack of Engagement / Interest from Residents

The students have noticed a drop in the number of residents attending their visits. Student 1 light-heartedly describes how there were a lot of residents in attendance at the start of the year but that fewer attend now.

The first week nearly the whole place came down to see the students, dying to see us and get a look. But normally it is now around 8. The numbers have dropped.

Whilst this student has observed the decrease in popularity, they do not seem to be concerned by it. The drop off in numbers could mean that the residents find the students visits challenging however there could be other preventative factors.

Student 3 noticed there is not much conversation due to the activities that take place during the visits. This student also felt that more residents should get involved, even if they were not up to taking part in the activities they felt that they would benefit from being around the energy. They think some may not attend for health reasons and that maybe visits to their homes could be a solution.

Student 2 noted that the residents are reserved when talking and sharing stories about their lives. This student feels they have to encourage the residents to open up and that they do share more once they get more comfortable but initially they are reserved.

This student advised that they would like more engagement from residents and that they would expect them to take the first step in conversation, as they are older. They felt the residents were holding back and waiting for the students to take the initiative. This is an interesting point as one resident wanted more engagement from the students so perhaps both groups are struggling to initiate conversation.

This student also mentioned their height and how loud they might come across suggesting this may intimidate the residents. A resident referred to the students' height and strong presence, so it is noteworthy that a student considered this as a barrier to interaction too.

Overall, the students notice some issues with how they are received by S.H.A.R.E.'s residents but have not attributed this to their own actions, for the most part, and assume that there are other instigating factors. They also tend to allocate responsibility to the residents to initiate conversation which displays absent awareness of potential reasons for the residents' difficulty in this area.

In reality, the students probably have more confidence than the residents, but the perception of "the older person" needing to take the lead and being more self-assured is a misconception that these visits should overcome.

4.2.3.3 Lack of Focus on Other Schools

One student, who attended a different school from S.H.A.R.E.'s principal school¹⁶, felt that the message should be passed to other schools regarding how much fun the intergenerational experience is, to encourage more schools to take part. This complements what one of the residents observed, suggesting there should be more variety in the schools taking part.

Student 2 refers to how it is not as easy to join if you are coming from a different school as you may not be as informed about what is involved, and it is more of a risk to join. This student feels that the more information that is provided, the easier it would be to commit. This point is also

¹⁶ S.H.A.R.E. has a long-standing connection with a school in Cork city that has been linked to the organisation since its foundation.

evidenced by students discussing joining S.H.A.R.E. as a result of families and past students passing down positive stories, which would not be prominent in other schools.

4.3 What is the impact of intergenerational volunteer activities in a care setting on service-users?

4.3.1 The intergenerational activity taking place is not a priority for the residents

All residents expressed positive appreciation of the students' visits. Resident 1 was a big fan of participating in activity for the wellbeing and happiness of all participants and showed consideration for the wellbeing of the other residents and students.

The residents imply that a certain degree of their motivations for attending the student visits was more for the students than for themselves. One resident decided not to attend one week and was surprised when they were missed by the students and now always attends the intergenerational events. This resident refers to tolerating the students and describes their presence as a challenge which suggests a sense of obligation on this resident's part to entertain the students and attend the visits, signifying they struggle to relate to this age-group.

Regarding low attendance from other residents, it is worthwhile noting that the residents interviewed demonstrated disappointment that more residents did not attend, advising that they are missing out.

Whether residents attend for themselves, or partly for the students' benefit, they are involved in activity that they enjoy, and they value the energy that the students bring. Two of the residents were positively surprised at how the students behaved and interacted with them.

Resident 3 expressed appreciation for the students' visits and seemed very happy with the process however preferred to discuss other aspects of their life such as outings organised by either themselves or S.H.A.R.E. and also the convenience of where their centre is located¹⁷. This implies that the students' visits are not a fundamental part of this resident's experience with S.H.A.R.E.

Two of the three residents interviewed look forward to the students' visits. The resident who does not necessarily look forward to the visits advised that this was due to their freedom being curtailed

¹⁷ This resident likes being close to town and their church.

which is a risk associated with on-site intergenerational programmes (Biggs and Knox, 2014, p.55).

4.3.2 Residents' Expectations of Teenagers

Resident 1 observed that the students are very obliging and helped with their phone and other technologies. There is an element of surprise in this resident's tone at how helpful they are.

They state that it takes a bit of time to open up to them but then you can ask them anything; they are really open, and the chat goes both ways.

It's a healthy sign to see them jump in and getting on with us.

This resident discusses how the students are more likely to get involved in activities, like dancing, than the residents are. This resident clearly has a lot of energy and the students match this well.

Resident 2 is a bit challenged by teenagers in general as they touch upon below.

They want to be treated like adults, but they behave like children.

This resident finds that the students are over-stimulated and says they can get down if things are not moving all the time, emphasising their preference for games and activities¹⁸, as opposed to conversation. This resident wishes the students were a bit calmer suggesting maybe this year's group does not suit them.

Resident 2 has had stronger friendships and a better experience with female students and also non-national students. They referred to a few previous examples of students whom they were very fond of, disclosing that they mostly happened to be female, non-national students. This could be attributed to different cultures, where perhaps non-national students volunteering with S.H.A.R.E. in Ireland, are more accustomed to associating with older generations, and perhaps have more respect for the wisdom and contribution of this age-group.

This resident also wants the student group to be more socially diverse, with students coming from different social groups and schools. This is most likely so they will be less of a clique.

¹⁸ The usual organised games are pool and bingo.

4.3.3 The Beneficial Impact for Residents

4.3.3.1 The presence and energy of the students has beneficial effects

It appears that the residents most likely benefit indirectly from the energy that the students bring as opposed to direct social engagement. These benefits may be harder to conceptualise; however, both the residents and the students suggest that being immersed in this energy is a positive thing.

Resident 1 says a little involvement with the students goes a long way and that just being around them has a positive impact but that residents have different needs and expectations of the activity.

Resident 2 indicates that just their presence is enough. Another resident is mentioned who does not take part in the activities but does sit in the room when the students are visiting to be around the energy.

Resident 2 has been told that just being around the students should be beneficial however they feel that the students should be interacting more and that the visits should be focused on engagement more so than games and activities. They also feel the students prioritise engaging with each other over engaging with the residents. They feel the friendship is a bit superficial because of this and suggest the activities be changed to encourage more direct communication.

They feel the whole purpose of the programme is direct interaction and that both age-groups would achieve positive gains from this. This resident had seen some students outside of the centre and the students had not said hello. This caused the resident to feel like the students were acknowledging the residents in the organised setting but that this friendship would not be extended outside of it.

While resident 2 believes that the students are overly focused on the activities, they do add that a quieter resident benefits much more from the activities as this is more suitable to their less vocal personality type. This resident also disclosed that some residents do not want to talk and just want to be left alone.

Resident 3 also mentions the pool and bingo when describing the intergenerational activity, reaffirming the focus on these activities. This resident continues to say that the energy and activity is enjoyable, and they look forward to the visits, as they bring a nice vibe, but not much is mentioned on direct engagement/conversation with the students.

4.3.3.2 Learning from the Students

Whilst the residents could learn from the students (for example with technology), they do not seem to feel comfortable asking them for help and therefore are not gaining new skills. However, Resident 1 said that, on the contrary, the students were incredibly helpful once asked and felt you could ask them anything. This again points to hindered engagement from both sides and creates the potential for improved communication and benefits if initial barriers are broken down.

4.3.3.3 Combatting Isolation

Resident 1 describes the intergenerational visits as bringing the community together and gives participants something to look forward to. This resident says it combats loneliness that many residents experience, however, some residents who may be lonely do not take part. They reveal that S.H.A.R.E.'s coffee mornings (which also combat loneliness) have a much higher rate of attendance.

This resident clearly sees great positives from engaging in intergenerational activity and refers to coaxing more residents to attend, perhaps by providing better snacks and beverages¹⁹. While this resident does appreciate the additional social events offered by S.H.A.R.E.²⁰, they view these activities as a bridge to keep people going while the students are not visiting.

Resident 1 also says it may be a personality factor and some residents have the confidence to get involved resulting in those who do not feel confident enough descending into further isolation. They intimate that those who are involved may need this interaction less than those who are not.

Resident 2 continuously refers to the students' visits impact on lowering isolation and affirms the advantages of keeping active to avoid a sense of fatalism and giving up on life that they believe some residents feel. In saying this, S.H.A.R.E.'s other organised social events, such as the coffee mornings and outings, are more popular with the residents.

This resident offers reasons why more residents do not participate such as preventing factors like physical and health concerns. Alcohol and addiction issues impede attendance also. This resident describes a sense of anger, sadness and frustration felt by residents making communication

¹⁹ This resident felt that there could be a bit more attention given to participants of the intergenerational visits such as ensuring milk did not run out. They suggested providing food, such as sandwiches, and also a better selection of beverages, which might result in a higher rate of attendance.

²⁰ Events include coffee mornings and organised outings.

problematic. This alludes to a deeper mental health concern that would require a more dedicated solution.

Resident 3 also discloses that there are far more students in attendance than residents and they cannot understand why more residents do not take part as they really enjoy the visits. This resident does not feel other residents should be encouraged to take part and says they should know themselves it is good for them.

The residents' determination to do their best to engage with the students suggests a sense of selflessness and resilience to take part. It may sometimes be a struggle for them, but they do seem to benefit, and it helps them to stay active and engaged. However, there are clear issues with low attendance and there may be a need for a more specialised solution to combat isolation for some residents.

4.3.3.4 Students' Perception of Residents Benefitting

The students seemed to assume the level of positive impact their presence had on the residents in S.H.A.R.E. with no certain opinions of its value. There were also hints of pity/one-sided gains suggested by the students when discussing the intergenerational visits.

Student 1 described how they felt the residents gained from the intergenerational visits:

It fills a void in the elderlies' lives up in [Location]. Like I would say it is one of the highlights of their week us going up there to see them.

This student added that the residents' moods are lifted when they visit.

I would say they are definitely in a better mood when we come up to play a game of bingo, definitely.

There is an assumption here that the residents are mentally and socially benefiting from this experience and that it is almost the best part of their week, however, the nature of this student's comments is tentative as this has not been confirmed by residents.

Student 2 feels that their conversations should be beneficial but when asked, they answer with doubt.

I am guessing maybe yeah, I would assume so.

This student refers to how they bring a different energy but maybe the residents could see them as annoying, loud or obnoxious which demonstrates this student's awareness of potential barriers to engagement.

This student also believes that the main service they bring to S.H.A.R.E. is the collections not the visits:

I would say being out in the streets and just making sure that you have enough money to keep *their* homes running for the next year is the important thing.

I still think the visitations have²¹ value to them, to a certain extent.

This student thinks they probably benefit more from mixing with the residents than the residents do mixing with them but does not expand on this.

Student 3 had heard stories about previous students bonding with the residents and that was a motivation for them to join. This student loves the visits with the residents and says there is always something fun happening, saying that the residents enjoy it so much but again this seems to be an assumption.

Student 3 reflects that they bonded quickly with the residents as they have such a young, fun mind-set. The visits closed a perceived age-gap for this student who did not realise they would be so comfortable chatting to the residents. This student also says the residents have interesting stories and are funny, suggesting that the students seem to place more value on the residents' input and conversation than the residents themselves²².

This student feels that both the students and the residents really enjoy the activities (the pool and bingo) and that they help with bonding. They added that they would see the residents in town and chat to them which was interesting, as one of the residents said the opposite, suggesting the friendships were more superficial. It may have been unintentional, what this resident experienced, but again lack of communication has exacerbated the issue.

Student 3 sees S.H.A.R.E. and its intergenerational visits as providing more than just food and water by adding meaning to life. They feel that the food and shelter, as essential as that is, should

²¹ "Have" is said here with a raise in tone suggesting uncertainty in this participant's response.

²² As expanded upon later, residents do not feel students are interested in listening to them.

be accompanied with company and independence. This demonstrates real understanding of what S.H.A.R.E. is about.

The students' positive opinions of the residents, and their observation that they seem unexpectedly closer to the students in age than they would have originally thought, is one example of this intergenerational activity combatting misconceptions about older people in society and it has clearly created a more accurate and improved viewpoint from current participating students of older generations.

4.3.4 Challenges

4.3.4.1 Residents are intimidated by the strong “group presence” of students

Both students and residents acknowledge a strong group dynamic amongst the visiting students. The students positively reference their close group however this dynamic appears to be an issue for some residents.

Resident 2 mentions the height of the students several times, hinting towards a sense of intimidation, which appears to originate from a combination of their physical presence and their dominant/confident personalities. This resident even suggested that they take over and that they almost feel like they are getting in their way.

Resident 2 finds direct communication stimulates their thoughts, and even though the students' presence is beneficial, they want increased interaction; similar to what they had experienced with students in previous years. This year, this resident observed that the students just talk amongst themselves.

Resident 3 (who seemed reluctant to criticise) started off by mentioning that it is a group now, suggesting it is on their mind. However, they went on to confirm that the group dynamic of the students was not an issue for them. At a later stage in the interview, when asked if they would ask the students to help them with technology they said they would not feel comfortable asking them because they are in a group. This resident mentions it used to be two students to a resident, demonstrating they noticed the change this year, but stated that they are happy with how things are.

4.3.4.2 Residents are reserved and cautious

The residents do not immediately open up to the students and discuss their personal lives. None of the residents share and compare experiences of when they were teenagers and seem to

feel the students would not be interested. Residents also express a lack of confidence in communicating directly with students, possibly stemming from the acknowledged group presence, which may be intimidating.

Resident 1 refers to the difficulty of students changing every year as it takes time to open up and develop friendships. Sometimes the students return to visit the residents after their year ends which this resident values.

Resident 3 does not have too much input regarding what they discuss, indicating they talk about general topics. It sounds like the friendships developed are not very deep for this resident. They reference the pool and the activities a lot, and that they join in and enjoy this, but there is little mention of either conversation or bonds developing.

From the students' perspective, they are happy to engage with and listen to the residents, so perhaps if they could portray this more effectively and intentionally try to act less perceivably intimidating, residents would relax and open up, and both groups would favour this.

4.4 What are the potential benefits of this concept for addressing the issue of an ageing population in Ireland?

From the perspective of addressing an ageing population, intergenerational activity brings energy and company to older age-groups. However, on examining the opinions of S.H.A.R.E.'s residents it is not a solution for more complex issues of isolation but is an effective method of fundraising.

4.4.1 Addressing an Ageing Population and Students' Social Awareness Development

The students are focused on the group that they are volunteering with, with all three students hinting that they would not value the experience without their group, suggesting they may not volunteer in the future outside of this group.

However, they all have awareness of the community participation they are engaging in and state their motivations for signing up as being partly to combat isolation felt by older people and to give back to their community. This being said, their tones of voices do not entirely demonstrate full understanding and connection to the cause. It is possible there are other motivations for engaging in this programme such as earning a positive reputation, adding charitable experiences to a CV or the biggest identifiable motivator here - the fun of taking part.

Student 1 is aware of the value of community engagement and sees their participation as contributing in this area, but they portray a sense of “doing a favour” for the residents, rather than both groups equally benefitting. This student’s social awareness has developed, however, and they do prioritise their visits with the residents. This student says they will be taking part in the collections again next year, demonstrating commitment to the organisation.

A motivating factor for this student to join S.H.A.R.E. was family influence. They mention their dad volunteering with S.H.A.R.E. when he was in school and that there is a strong connection between their school and S.H.A.R.E. Student 1 also says their brother will be taking part next year after hearing about their experience.

Student 3 seemed to be more focused on the fun and the group also. However, this student said they would volunteer in the same sector again as it was motivating to see directly where the collected funds went, and they felt more connected to the cause.

This student considers the residents, as they say they are lovely people and they contemplate where they might be without this fundraising and S.H.A.R.E., adding that their priorities at Christmas had changed. The collections were tough, but they were an amazing experience and they were the priority for students; they did not think of anything else and the shared determination was a real bonding experience.

Student 3 showed the most awareness for what they were a part of, giving the opinion that they feel older people are pushed to the side in Ireland and that there should be more services in place to provide company and maintain independence. This student sees S.H.A.R.E. and its intergenerational visits as providing more than just food and water but meaning to life. There were strong indications that this student would continue to engage in community and voluntary contribution.

Regarding motivations to sign up, Student 2 mentions the fun aspect of the programme. Family influence was also referenced by this student whose sister told them about the experience and said she regretted not taking part in the programme having heard how much fun it was. This student also had a base awareness of giving back to their community from a social work class taught in school.

Student 2 says it was easier to take part in fundraising when you were well-informed and knew exactly who you were collecting for. Their priority is collecting for the residents to keep their

homes running for the year which demonstrates increased commitment gained from engaging with the residents.

Christmas was completely different for Student 2 whose priorities were no longer self-orientated at this time. Student 2 felt more connected to the plight of the homeless in Cork in winter from being outside for long periods during the collections also.

This student enjoyed Christmas this year due to being out collecting with other people their own age, doing something worthwhile. They described the activity as being more than just associating with friends at Christmas, as there is something inexplicably more valuable about it.

It could be concluded that these students may be more likely to volunteer with S.H.A.R.E., over other third-sector organisations, as they felt close to the residents, but that they may also be more likely to volunteer in a similar sector due to learning from their experience. They may also engage in more volunteer work helping those at risk of homelessness after witnessing this issue and sympathising with those affected during collections.

Conversely, it would be difficult to state that this intergenerational activity has led to increased awareness about the risk of isolation felt by older groups in Irish society or whether the students had achieved the intended value, in its entirety, from this interaction.

4.5 Conclusion

After examining these findings, it seems that the students currently benefit more from this intergenerational programme than the residents do. Their most notable social gains are achieved through new or strengthened friendships formed with other volunteers. They also seem to enjoy the intergenerational engagement slightly more than the residents.

They learn valuable life skills, such as developing a social conscience, and the responsibility of an organisation relying on their fundraising efforts. The positives appear to greatly outweigh the negatives for students who join S.H.A.R.E.'s volunteer programme.

It is evident that the residents do enjoy the students' visits, which provide a social opportunity that they value, but that they could get more out of the programme if engagement increased.

It is possible that the students would be better able to communicate with the residents if they learned more about their circumstances, and possible reasons for reserved attitudes, in advance. For example, if students tried to appear less intimidating and separated from their core group to interact further, the residents would most likely benefit more.

The residents demonstrate selfless qualities and show great desire to entertain and keep the students happy, suggesting the visits are more of an obligation for them than a benefit. Overall, it seems the intergenerational visits are not the core of what S.H.A.R.E. offers to its residents.

To target isolation, the visits are certainly valuable but there is a need for further efforts to be made combat more severe issues of isolation, and poor mental health, that some residents experience.

In relation to addressing the issue of an ageing population, it is difficult to conclude whether this experience would result in students volunteering in the future for organisations that help older people, however it is likely that they have a strong bond formed with S.H.A.R.E. and the residents which may result in future assistance being given to this organisation. Additionally, Finn and Scharf (2012) observed that, on analysing intergenerational projects taking place in Ireland, even one-off events tended to lead to further intergenerational activity developments, suggesting that by getting involved initially, participants are motivated to do more in this area (Finn and Scharf, 2012, p.3).

The students' main achievement was raising a phenomenal amount of money for S.H.A.R.E. which is a very valuable contribution. However, there is no great potential demonstrated by the students in relation to caregiving or improving mental health for this age-group, at this time.

There is clear room for improvement, from the point of view of the residents, who could gain more from the students' visits such as help with technology and increased direct communication.

There does seem to have been a barrier to deeper engagement this year that could be overcome with further involvement from S.H.A.R.E. coordinators. This recommendation, along with additional prospective suggestions, will be elaborated upon in the next chapter, which will offer discussions and recommendations based upon these primary findings.

Chapter 5

Discussions and Recommendations



Chapter 5: Discussions and Recommendations

As the purpose of this study is to examine the impact of intergenerational activity on both student and resident participants, alongside looking at the potential of this programme in addressing an ageing population, this concluding chapter will focus on examining the findings relevant to these questions, alongside offering recommendations for the future.

5.1 Recommendations

5.1.1 Increase Communication Facilitation

Finn and Scharf (2012) have concluded that greater preparation and follow up visits would likely enhance learning potential for all stakeholders involved in intergenerational activity (Finn and Scharf, 2012, p.29). It would be beneficial if students were more thoroughly prepared before the intergenerational visits with S.H.A.R.E. start.

Regarding residents not opening up to the student volunteers, low interaction, perceived intimidation and the powerful group presence, it would be advisable for the collaborating schools and S.H.A.R.E. to organise introductory events and to plan activities that will break the ice so that when the visits start, participants are already familiar with each other. Both residents and students mentioned that it was difficult, at the start, to initiate conversation and it appears communication is still a little restricted, with both age-groups feeling they would benefit from increased interaction.

If students were also made aware of the possible impacts that previous isolation, and other issues, may have had on the residents it might encourage them to initiate conversation, to help the residents feel comfortable. They would likely deliberately change their behaviour, if they were aware that residents were intimidated, as they currently do not realise there is an issue.

The residents seem to believe that the students would not be interested in listening to their stories, which is not the case, as highlighted previously. The students have noticed a lack of engagement from residents but are not clear as to the cause. They need to be made aware that their presence could be perceived as intimidating to encourage them to separate from their group, mix more with residents and avoid *“taking over the centre”*. Student 2 demonstrated awareness regarding this issue and it should be highlighted to all students, especially as it is most likely unintentional. The students seem to want the residents to be happy, so it is likely that future students would want the same and would try to ensure this is the case.

The only potential issue here is that it is possible that the students' lack of awareness of how the residents might be struggling could be due to their age or maturity, which would be more problematic to overcome.

Ideally, residents should be attending because they enjoy the visits, not because they feel compelled to attend, and perhaps with a little more involvement from S.H.A.R.E. coordinators the visits could be tailored so that all participants are comfortable and happy with the process.

5.1.2 Involve More Schools

A resident and a student observed that the programme was overly focused on one school. The resident wanted to see a more varied background in students and felt that the students were too much of a clique, due to predominantly coming from the same school.

Two students acknowledged this prioritising of one school and felt it would be beneficial to encourage involvement from more schools and give other students more support in signing up to S.H.A.R.E. This is something S.H.A.R.E.'s programme coordinators could look into.

5.1.3 Increase Resident Attendance

It is clear that the number of attending residents is low, and it is a shame that some choose not to. As stated in the previous chapter, there are preventing factors that cannot be controlled, such as issues with health or physical ailments, and there was also a point identified regarding the more complex mental health problems that may affect some residents, which the intergenerational visits would not alleviate and will require a more specialised solution.

However, it also seems that there are residents who could attend, but choose not to, especially considering the high resident turnout at the start of the programme. S.H.A.R.E. could try to raise the popularity of the visits, perhaps with more exciting snacks and beverages as one resident suggested. There may be other ways S.H.A.R.E. could consider promoting the intergenerational visits, such as offering more activities, and perhaps better introduction sessions at the start, which would facilitate bonds being formed sooner.

As one student suggested, it could be an idea to organise visits to the residents' homes, which would suit those who are struggling to travel to the community room. This would have to be considered with caution, to ensure the residents did not feel their privacy was being invaded, and also to ensure students felt comfortable with this, and that there was a S.H.A.R.E. coordinator present.

5.1.4 Activities

There is a mixed opinion from both groups regarding how beneficial the activities are. Most seem to really enjoy the activities, and they may better suit more reserved residents as previously mentioned, and they certainly facilitate engagement for some attendees.

However, since the activities are a central component of the visits, it is important that there is enough variety offered to suit all attendees.

Even though residents benefit from being around the energy the students bring, if they become overly focused on these activities, it must be considered that they may be counter-productive and defeating the purpose of the visits. It is worth considering whether there would be much point in the visits if engagement is impeded too extensively by these games.

Overall, it may be valuable to introduce more games that increase communication levels, such as card games, to complement the current activities on offer.

5.1.5 Embrace the Effectiveness of Student Fundraising Capabilities

Students' efforts seem to be well suited to fundraising pursuits, and the students themselves feel that their collection attempts are as, or more, important than the visits with the residents. The capabilities that students bring to fundraising attempts should be capitalised on by S.H.A.R.E. as the students seem to excel in this area.

The Christmas fundraiser is a crucial part of the students' experience and the selfless attitude they adopt at this time is an important part of enhancing their social awareness therefore this should continue to be an important part of S.H.A.R.E.'s intergenerational programme.

5.2 Conclusions

5.2.1 Is Intergenerational Activity Beneficial to Both Groups?

On analysing residents' comments, there is an underlying implication that intergenerational activity can be beneficial to both groups, in terms of the direct communication and engagement, if the student volunteers are well-suited to the programme. Previous students have availed of the visits to share their problems and escape from issues they may be experiencing in school. While this year's students stated the visits were an escape from the pressures of school and exams, there is no indication that there is social value gained from the intergenerational engagement.

One resident found they formed friendships with students from previous years, and had experienced mutual, open communication. If the residents feel intimidated by the strong group dynamic of this year's students, this possibly restricts communication and impedes openness.

The growing popularity of the programme amongst students has resulted in more interested volunteers for the following year; however, the changes in the programme seem to negatively affect the experience for the residents, resulting in less satisfied service-users. The fun and the social gains that students experience will guarantee more volunteers, but the emerging, discernible concern here is whether this is really the right reason to join S.H.A.R.E., and whether it fits in with the organisation's ethos.

Ideally S.H.A.R.E. would like both groups to benefit so it is a matter of achieving the right balance so that both demographics are satisfied with the programme.

5.2.2 Student Attitudes

The students all suggested that they would not value the experience if it was not for their group, however, given that the students did not know how well their volunteer group would bond, it would not be justifiable to say that they signed up to S.H.A.R.E. for this sole reason. It seems this was a bonus that they truly appreciated that became a valued aspect of the programme for them.

However, the students prioritising being with their group, over the actual intergenerational experience, is a concerning factor as there should be more attention given to the residents, and less to their fellow volunteers. The goal of the programme is intergenerational activity, and mixing with different age-groups, so it defeats the purpose if they are solely focused on their own peers.

The students also seem to possess an attitude of semi-superiority, almost inferring that they are elite, which does not seem appropriate for the voluntary and community sector. It would be more appropriate if the students adopted an attitude of equality and amalgamation with members of their community. The verging on patronising approach to the residents would not really help service-users to feel valued and integrated in society.

The voluntary sector should offer respect and equality from contributing volunteers, who are altruistic and volunteering purely to help, not to achieve social or alternative gains. This being said, S.H.A.R.E. concerns itself with the happiness of its students and wants them to benefit

equally from this programme, so from this point of view, given that the students are benefiting, the programme is working.

5.2.3 Connection to the Cause

The intergenerational activity examined here appears to be very beneficial from a fundraising perspective. The students had the energy and motivation to push themselves to reach and exceed their fundraising targets and acted as a link between the organisation and the public to achieve this.

The intergenerational activity, that is synonymous with S.H.A.R.E., enhances fundraising potential for two reasons. Firstly, the students' motivations are stronger, due to their connection to the cause, and their friendships built with the residents. They are able to see how their fundraising efforts translate into improved circumstances for the residents, whom they have developed these friendships with.

One student referred to previous flagship collections they had been a part of, and discussed handing collected money up at the end of the day, and not thinking about it any further. In collecting for S.H.A.R.E., this student felt connected to the cause and knew exactly where the proceeds were going. They also felt a sense of duty to the residents and wanted to do well for them to ensure their security and comfort.

Secondly, the public has strong associations with S.H.A.R.E., the students and their aims. It is a longstanding Cork tradition for school students to be seen collecting for S.H.A.R.E.'s residents at Christmas time and represents young people thinking of others. The campaign would lose its influence and established status, if it was not the students who carried out the collections.

5.2.4 Historical Connection

Due to a historical relationship developed with S.H.A.R.E.'s main partnering school, the organisation is guaranteed sustained support. Volunteering with S.H.A.R.E. has become a notably worthwhile and enjoyable experience for students, resulting in a lot of students who didn't necessarily initially want to volunteer, doing so due to previous students' satisfaction with the experience. Siblings and parents who have attended the same school pass down their stories and their commitment to the cause, and S.H.A.R.E. is the main charity that this school's efforts are focused upon.

From a general perspective, collaborating with local schools appears to be an effective way to raise awareness and receive support for a local cause. It leads to greater commitment and long-

term support that is passed down through generations. This would be challenging to achieve short-term and whilst it may have been very successful for S.H.A.R.E., it may be difficult for other organisations to establish. One critique identified of this strong relationship was that it could result in other school students being excluded, or less supported.

5.2.5 Addressing an Ageing Population

Intergenerational activity is a crucial component of S.H.A.R.E.'s operations and the students' fundraising success is so strong because of the bonds that they have formed with residents, as is evident from all three student interviews.

The intergenerational visits are not a solution for care provision, or tackling deeper, more complex mental health concerns, for this increasing demographic. However, from an engagement perspective, Resident 2 refers to anger felt by residents which they link to urbanisation, and a lack of opportunities to express themselves, due to decreased community life, so the visits help to combat this frustration and sense of isolation.

The students have formed an improved perception of older age-groups which demonstrates intergenerational activity working to combat stereotypes and negative misconceptions.

5.2.6 Student Development of a Social Conscience

Students do not seem to have developed complete awareness of the social issues experienced by older people, and the implications of poverty and isolation. They also do not imply that they have been motivated to do further community and voluntary work from this experience, apart from one student who has thought about this. However, their commitment to the residents they have met, and to S.H.A.R.E., is high.

The Christmas collections have facilitated several social learning opportunities for participating students. They all stated they were more aware of homeless issues in Cork and felt empathy for those experiencing it. They also felt committed to the beneficiaries of their efforts and were more determined than they would have been at previous collections, due to their friendships with the residents. Finally, they all stated Christmas itself, at least the commercial aspect of the holiday, was far less important to them, and that their focus was on S.H.A.R.E., as opposed to going out and enjoying themselves and buying presents.

One student had developed an increased awareness of the importance of social fulfilment for the service-users, emphasising that the provision of food and shelter was not sufficient, and that the

residents needed meaning to life and social outlets. This same student also suggested that older people were pushed to the side in Irish policy decision-making.

To conclude, there are distinct benefits for both participating parties. Within this study, it seems the students have benefitted the most however this may be specific to this year's programme. While there have been several recommendations made to improve upon this intergenerational activity to maximise its positive impact, or to expand its current reach, it is certainly already achieving many positive outcomes for all participants.

Bibliography

Barrett A. et al. (2011) *Fifty plus in Ireland 2011: First results from The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA)*, Department of Psychology, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, [Online], Available:

<https://epubs.rcsi.ie/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://scholar.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1047&context=psycholrep>. Last accessed 28/08/2018.

Biggs, M.J.G. and Knox, K.S. (2014) *Lessons Learned from an Intergenerational Volunteer Program: A Case Study of a Shared-Site Model*, Journal of Intergenerational Relationships, Routledge, [Online]. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15350770.2014.869981>. Last accessed 31/08/2018.

Carroll, N. (2011) *Generation DVD for Louth Age Friendly County*, [Online Video], 24 August 2011, Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BUNv1fH3eFQ>. Last accessed 04/02/2018.

Ethics in Research (n.d.) *What are Research Ethics*, pp.1-6, [Online], Available: https://ucc.ie/blackboard.com/bbcswebdav/pid-1325126-dt-content-rid-2407997_1/courses/2018-SS6602/Ethics%20in%20applied%20social%20research%20notes.pdf. Last accessed 29/08/2018.

Finn, C. and Scharf, T. (2012) *Intergenerational Programmes in Ireland: An Initial Overview*, Irish Centre for Social Gerontology, National University of Ireland Galway. [Online], Available:

http://www.icsg.ie/sites/www.icsg.ie/files/personfiles/intergenerational_projects_in_ireland.pdf. Last accessed 29/08/2018.

Surlis, M. (2009) *Living Scenes - History*, NUI Galway, [Online], Available: <http://livingscenes.nuigalway.ie/history.html>. Last accessed 30/08/2018.

Weintraub, A.P.C. and Killian, T.S. (2007) *Intergenerational Programming: Older Persons' Perceptions of Its Impact*, Journal of Applied Gerontology, Vol. 26, No.4, pp.370 – 384, Sage, [ONLINE]. Available:

<https://doi-org.ucc.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/0733464807302671>. Last accessed 31/08/2018.

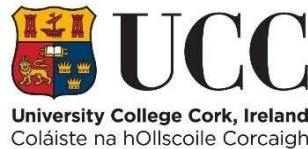
S.H.A.R.E. (2017) *The Story of S.H.A.R.E.* Available: <http://sharecork.org/story-of-share/>. Last

accessed 31/08/2018.

Appendices

APPENDIX A: Consent Information Sheet

INFORMATION SHEET



Purpose of the Study: As part of the requirements for MSocSc Voluntary & Community Sector Management at UCC, I have to carry out a research study. The study is concerned with evaluating the effectiveness and also the benefits of intergenerational activity.

What will the study involve? The study will involve interviewing both students and residents of S.H.A.R.E. to form an understanding of the intergenerational activity that S.H.A.R.E. promotes. Interviews will be held one-on-one with selected participants and should take about half an hour per person. Interviews with students will have a S.H.A.R.E. coordinator present also. Participants will be asked to share their views about their own experience of intergenerational activity by answering a sample of pre-designed questions. The interviews will be recorded in order for the interviewer to be able to transcribe the conversations.

Why have you been asked to take part? You have been asked to take part because of your direct experience engaging in intergenerational activity through S.H.A.R.E.

Do you have to take part? No. Participation in this research project is voluntary and participants have the option to withdraw at any stage before the work has been

published / submitted. A copy of the consent form, alongside this information sheet, will be provided to each participant. Participants will be asked to sign a copy of the consent form agreeing that they give their consent for their information to be used in this research project. If a participant does opt to withdraw their contribution their information will be destroyed.

Will your participation in the study be kept confidential? Yes. There will be no link to your identity in this dissertation and any extracts from what you say that are quoted in this project will be entirely anonymous.

What will happen to the information which you give? The data will be kept confidential for the duration of the study, available only to me and my research supervisor. It will be securely stored on a password protected device. On completion of the project, they will be retained for minimum of a further ten years and then destroyed. **What will happen to the results?** The results will be presented in the dissertation. They will be seen by my supervisor, a second marker and the external examiner. The thesis may be read by future students on the course. The study may be published in a research journal.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part? I don't envisage any negative consequences for you in taking part in this project due to the nature of the discussion.

What if there is a problem? At the end of the procedure, I will discuss with you how you found the experience and how you are feeling. If you subsequently feel distressed, you should contact your coordinator for further information and support.

Who has reviewed this study? Approval for this study has been given by my research supervisor and a coordinator in S.H.A.R.E. There was no requirement for the Social Research Ethics Committee of UCC to approve these interviews in advance due to the nature of the interview discussion topics.

Any further queries? If you need any further information, you can contact me: Miranda Russell, Ph: 0872114379, Email: 116224232@umail.ucc.ie.

If you agree to take part in the study, please sign the consent form overleaf.

[Over...

APPENDIX B: Student Consent Form

STUDENT CONSENT FORM



I agree to participate in Miranda Russell's research study. The purpose and nature of the study has been explained to me in writing.

I am participating voluntarily.

I give permission for my interview with Miranda Russell to be audio-recorded.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study, without repercussions, at any time, whether before it starts or while I am participating.

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use the data within two weeks of the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.

I understand that anonymity will be ensured in the write-up by disguising my identity.

I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the thesis and any subsequent publications if I give permission below:

(Please tick one)

I agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my interview

I do not agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my interview

Signed:

Date:

PRINT NAME:

Coordinator's Signature –

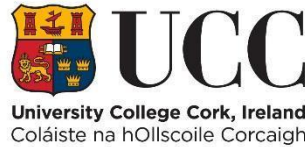
Signed:

Date:

PRINT NAME:

APPENDIX C: Resident Consent Form

RESIDENT CONSENT FORM



I agree to participate in Miranda Russell's research study.

The purpose and nature of the study has been explained to me in writing.

I am participating voluntarily.

I give permission for my interview with Miranda Russell to be audio-recorded.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study, without repercussions, at any time, whether before it starts or while I am participating.

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use the data at any time, in which case the material will be deleted.

I understand that anonymity will be ensured in the write-up by disguising my identity.

I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the thesis and any subsequent publications if I give permission below:

(Please tick one)

I agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my interview

I do not agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my interview

Signed:

Date:

PRINT NAME:

APPENDIX D: Ethics Application Form



RESEARCH ETHICS FORM

School of Applied Social Studies

Introduction

In UCC, research ethics is the remit of the University Ethics Committee (UEC). There are three ethics subcommittees under the remit of UEC, one of which is the Social Research Ethics Committee (SREC). This committee (SREC) reviews research proposals submitted by university staff and research-based postgraduate students seeking ethical approval for social research (as distinct from clinical research or research involving animal experimentation). The work of SREC is strongly informed by the UCC Code of Research Conduct (2016).

See:

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/research/researchatucc/documents/UCCCodeofResearchConduct.pdf>

UEC and SREC seek to ensure that supervisors and researchers are sufficiently supported to undertake research (which may involve human participants) to the highest possible standards and with due regard to the welfare of all concerned.

PLEASE NOTE:

All undergraduate and taught postgraduate students should discuss the ethical implications of what research they are proposing to do with their supervisors and complete this research ethics form for their supervisor. This form can be included as an appendix in the submitted research report. It is strongly advised that all students adhere to the guidance on ethical issues provided by their supervisors and consult with supervisors should unanticipated ethical issues arise. Students should carefully abide by any ethical guidelines for their research provided by their course teams or in their course handbooks, as well as the UCC Code of Research Conduct in their research. See:

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/research/researchatucc/documents/UCCCodeofResearchConduct.pdf>

Should disagreements or difficulties arise in relation to ethical issues that cannot be resolved between supervisor and student or course team and student, the assistance of members of the School of Applied Social Studies Research and Ethics Committees can be sought (e.g. Liz Kiely at e.kiely@ucc.ie and Orla O' Donovan at o.odonovan@ucc.ie).

Complete this check list and discuss with your supervisor

If your answer falls into any of the shaded boxes, please address each point later on in the form.

		YES	NO	N/A
1	Have you discussed your proposed research and your ethical review with your supervisor?	x		
2	Do you consider that this project has significant ethical implications?		x	
3	Will the main research procedures be outlined to potential research participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	x		
4	Will research participation be voluntary?	x		
5	Will informed consent be obtained in writing from research participants?	x		
6	Will you tell research participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason, and (where relevant) omit questionnaire items/ questions to which they do not wish to respond?	x		

7	Will data be treated with full confidentiality/ anonymity (as appropriate) ²³ ?	x		
8	Will data be securely held for a minimum period of ten years after the completion of a research project, in line with the University's <i>Code of Research Conduct</i> (2016)?	x		
9	If results are published, will anonymity be maintained and participants not identified?	x		
10	Will participants be debriefed at the end of their participation (i.e. will you give them a brief explanation of the study and address any concerns they may have after research participation)?	x		
11	Will your project involve deliberately misleading participants in any way?		x	
12	Will research participants include children/ young persons (under 18 years of age)?	x		
13	If yes to question 12, is your research informed by the UCC <i>Child Protection Policy</i> ? http://www.ucc.ie/en/ocla/policy/	x		
14	Will your project require you to carry out "relevant work" as defined in the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016? ²⁴	x		
15	Do you require official Garda Vetting through UCC before collecting data from children or vulnerable adults? ²⁵	x		
16	Will research participants include people with learning or communication difficulties?		x	
17	Will research participants include patients/ service users/ clients?		x	
18	Will research participants include people in custody?		x	
19	Will research participants include people engaged in illegal activities (e.g. drug taking, illegal Internet behaviour, crime, etc.)?		x	

²³ Researchers must ensure the confidentiality of data gathered in the course of the research (i.e. where that data is not already in the public domain). Where appropriate they must ensure privacy or anonymity of human participants. Researchers should not intrude into persons' lives beyond what is required for the purpose of the research.

²⁴ Relevant work constitutes any work or activity which is carried out by a person, a necessary and regular part of which consists mainly of the person having access to, or contact with, children or vulnerable adults.

²⁵ It is not an official requirement of the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016 for researchers to be Garda Vetted to undertake research with children and vulnerable persons for *once off* contact, other than where it includes activities such as coaching, mentoring, counselling, teaching or training of children or vulnerable persons. Some gatekeepers and funders may require researchers to have a valid Garda Vetting before data collection can begin, even for *once off* contact. For researchers planning for ongoing data collection with children and vulnerable persons or where contact may be unsupervised, Garda Vetting is likely to be required. Researchers should follow the advice in the *UCC Child Protection Policy* and the UCC Garda Vetting guidelines (links above).

20a	Is there a realistic risk of participants experiencing either physical or psychological distress due to research participation?		x	
20b	Is there a realistic risk of you, as the researcher, experiencing either physical or psychological distress?		x	
21	If yes to question 20a, has a proposed procedure for linking the participants to an appropriate support, including the name of a contact person, been given?			x
22	If yes to question 20b, has a proposed procedure/support structure been identified?			x
23	Are the research participants also students with whom you have some current/previous connection (class members, friends, tutor, etc.)?		x	
24	Will research participants receive payment/ gifts/ vouchers/ etc. for participating in this study?		x	
25	Are you accessing, collecting or analysing confidential agency documents or case files? If yes, please give details of compliance with the agency's policy on data protection and confidentiality below in your review.		x	

If you did not tick any shaded boxes proceed to Part A and complete the relevant form. If you did tick shaded boxes please proceed directly to Part B and complete the relevant form.

PART A: DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

*Ethical review requires that you **reflect** and seek to **anticipate** ethical issues that may arise,*

rather than reproduce copious text from existing research proposals into these boxes.

*Entries should be **concise** and relevant to the point/ question.*

A. Very brief description of your study (15-25 words max.)

[e.g. This is a narrative literature review (desk-based) examining group work interventions with young people on the theme of sexual health]

This research aims to examine the benefits for service users and volunteers of S.H.A.R.E. and to identify the value achieved from intergenerational activity.

B. What is your study about? (Aim and Objectives / Key Research Questions) (100-150 words max.)

The aim of this research is to study both the learning and health benefits achieved from intergenerational activity. It also aims to identify the achieved social benefits that emerge from this intergenerational activity

by means of combatting stereotyping and ageism. It should also identify the potential to increase levels of understanding and respect between older and younger people.

This research will examine the experiences of both demographics, highlighting the benefits that are achieved through volunteering by both the service users and the volunteers themselves.

This research seeks to define the impact of intergenerational activities in an older person care-based setting, from the perspective of the service-users and the volunteers, whilst also addressing whether the Irish government is actively delivering upon its active aging policy promoting intergenerational activities set out in the National Positive Ageing Strategy (2013).

C. Concise statement of *anticipated* ethical issues raised by your project. How do you intend to deal with them? For example, your research could be desk-based but may still involve sensitive/ controversial material (100-150 words max.). In relation to any kind of research with human subjects you need to address the issue of **informed consent** and how that will be addressed, **safe data storage** for the duration of the project and beyond and how you will safeguard the **rights and welfare of research subjects**. If research is being conducted with **any** human subjects, information leaflets, consent forms etc., which have supervisor oversight, should be routinely used.

The only outstanding ethical consideration is that the participants will be between 16 - 17 years of age, however the subject matter to be discussed will not be of a sensitive or potentially controversial nature. If any ethical issues emerge they will be dealt with as per the guidelines outlined in the DYCA Ethical Guidance report.

At least one member of the trustees of S.H.A.R.E. will be present throughout the interview/focus group session. Informed consent will be acquired from both the under-aged participants and their parent/guardian. Complete anonymity will be guaranteed for this research project for under-aged participants. Participants will be advised of all aspects of the research including intended use and research aims. Any data collected from research participants will be stored on a password-protected device. The welfare and rights of the research participants will not be compromised during this research project.

PART B: DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

*Ethical review requires that you **reflect** and seek to **anticipate** ethical issues that may arise,
rather than reproduce copious text from existing research proposals into these boxes.*

*Entries should be **concise** and relevant to the point/ question.*

A. Very brief description of your study (15-25 words max.)

[i.e. This is a qualitative study of primary school teachers' attitudes towards religious teaching using focus groups to collect original data]

This research aims to examine the benefits for service users and volunteers of S.H.A.R.E. and to identify the value achieved from intergenerational activity.

B. What is your study about? (Please include your research objectives and research questions here. 200 words max.)

The aim of this research is to study both the learning and health benefits achieved from intergenerational activity. It also aims to identify the achieved social benefits that emerge from this intergenerational activity by means of combatting stereotyping and ageism. It should also identify the potential to increase levels of understanding and respect between older and younger people.

This research will examine the experiences of both demographics, highlighting the benefits that are achieved through volunteering by both the service users and the volunteers themselves.

This research seeks to define the impact of intergenerational activities in an older person care-based setting, from the perspective of the service-users and the volunteers, whilst also addressing whether the Irish government is actively delivering upon its active aging policy promoting intergenerational activities set out in the National Positive Ageing Strategy (2013).

C. Brief description and justification of methods and measures to be used (attach questionnaire/ interview protocol/ focus group discussion guide etc.)

Questions will be designed in collaboration with S.H.A.R.E. and will be delivered through means of a focus group, in the presence of an adult trustee of S.H.A.R.E., with the under-aged participants. The questions will

aim to decipher the level of benefits achieved by student volunteers through their interactions with service-users of S.H.A.R.E.

D. Participants (recruitment methods, number, age, gender, exclusion/ inclusion criteria, detail permissions to be sought/ secured already). Please ensure that your supervisor sees any relevant information sheets and consent forms, confidentiality agreements etc. that you intend to use with research participants. How will you ensure that research participants' rights and needs are looked after in the research process?

S.H.A.R.E. has advised that they would like to recruit/select participants for this research project directly and that they would like to engage with current volunteers. Research participants will be provided with informed consent forms to be signed by participants and their parent/guardian. Participants will be ensured that their contribution will be voluntary and that should they wish to withdraw their participation at any time they are free to do so. They will be advised in advance of the aims of the research and the intended use of their information. They will be advised that their information will be recorded and stored on an encrypted device. They will also be assured that their contribution will be confidential and anonymous.

E. Concise statement of *anticipated* ethical issues raised by your project. How do you intend to deal with them? Please address all items where your answers fell into a shaded box in the self-evaluation above. (200 words max.)

The only outstanding ethical consideration is that the participants will be between 16 - 17 years of age, however the subject matter to be discussed will not be of a sensitive or potentially controversial nature. If any ethical issues emerge they will be dealt with as per the guidelines outlined in the DYCA Ethical Guidance report.

F. Where will you store your data (paper and electronic files) over the duration of the project and after it has ended?²⁶ How will you anonymise the data? How will you ensure no unauthorised person will be able to access confidential research materials? (150 words max.)

Data will be recorded on a password encrypted device. It will then be transcribed onto a password encrypted device. No information will be stored on the cloud. Data will be kept only for the duration required by UCC

²⁶ It is recommended that you **do not** save research data (audio files, transcripts, etc.) on cloud storage systems. It is recommended that you encrypt any device (laptop/backup drive) used to store research data (e.g. questionnaires, audio files, transcripts) and that you keep regular backups of your files. For advice on how to encrypt a PC or Mac laptop using built in free operating system resources, see this link: <http://www.ucc.ie/en/it/services/encryptionlaptop/>.

guidelines. Student contributions will be recorded by a number or code name as opposed to storing their information in connection to their names / personal details.

What do I show my supervisor with this form?

1. A copy of your *draft* data collection instrument(s) (interview guide, questionnaire, survey, focus group schedule, etc.).
2. A copy of your information guide for the study.
3. A copy of your information sheet, informed consent form and any other forms used in the research process.

Website links and helpful resources

UCC Child Protection Policy	https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/ocla/policies/UCCChildProtectionPolicyFINAL.pdf
UCC Code of Research Conduct	https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/research/researchatucc/documents/UCCCodeofResearchConduct.pdf
UCC Student Vetting Policy	https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/studyatucc/undergrads/downloadabledocumentssection/StudentVettingPolicyandProcedure.pdf
IT Support for UCC Students	http://sit.ucc.ie
EU Commission, Responsible Research and Innovation & H2020 RRI Tools Website	https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/responsible-research-innovation http://www.rri-tools.eu/
SREC (Master by Research and PhD students only)	https://www.ucc.ie/en/research/ethics/
Applied Social Studies Staff	http://www.ucc.ie/en/appsoc/staff/

APPENDIX E: Sample Interview Transcript

Sample Interview Transcript

Interviewer: Do you look forward to the students coming on a Wednesday?

Interviewee: Yeah, we do, we look forward to it, there are about 4 or 5 of us there. We look forward to them. We play ... sometimes we have a puzzle, we play puzzles and we play pool and we, they make tea and we have biscuits, sandwiches or whatever you know?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: They have to go about half 3/4 o'clock, so we saw them 2 to 4. Sometimes they have to go at half past 3 to catch their buses.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewee: But I would say we look forward to it every week (positive tone of voice here.).

Interviewer: So, pool, you play pool. Do you play pool then?

Interviewee: Yeah, I do.

Interviewer: Ah ok, I saw the pool table downstairs, so I was wondering about that.

Interviewee: Yeah, I know the boys ... I was playing with them yesterday.

Interviewer: That's fun actually, you don't find many pool tables around I'm always looking for one and can never find any so it's nice to have that.

Interviewee: Yeah, it's only ever in the bars or the clubs, the Mardyke I used to go there before, I used to go to the clubs and play.

Interviewer: Yeah, so do you think, or would you say everyone enjoys the pool then it's kind of a ...

Interviewee: No, uh, no, uh, but the girls are starting to learn now above you know they are joining in now. I teach some of them as well.

Interviewer: Ah ok, so are you very good?

Interviewee: Ah no, no, not that good. Not good enough (laughing).

Interviewer: I do think you need someone to teach you there is definitely a bit of a skill to it.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: So, you play pool and puzzles you said?

Interviewee: Yeah em puzzles like answering questions you know? We have cards, they have questions on and answers and forums like quizzes you know?

Interviewer: Yeah, great so quizzes ...

Interviewee: Yeah, we do them as well.

Interviewer: That was one of the things I was going to ask you was sort of to see I suppose if the activities ... That's the thing the activities can be enjoyed by any age?

Interviewee: Yeah, any.

Interviewer: Which is great. So, you teach them to play pool ...

Interviewee: Yeah and they enjoy it too and we enjoy them. Sharing you know? Sharing what they know and what we know.

Interviewer: Exactly yeah that's funny you are saying that because that's exactly what I was wondering did that happen because I suppose it's a learning experience for both sides I suppose.

Interviewee: Both sides, yeah.

Interviewer: Because you would have grown up in a different time, so I was wondering do you talk about when you were their age and share about that time? Would you go into that or would they be interested in that?

Interviewee: Some of them, but not all of them like you know? Until they get to know you and then they get to know you better and then ... and we get to know them so it takes time to build that, but we do.

Interviewer: And would you say, I suppose, from when the start when you meet them you would have sort of an initial friendship with them, would you say that a friendship would develop with the students over the course of the year?

Interviewee: Oh yeah, it would because they get, they get very fond of us and they get used to coming and then they say even after we finish they come and see us sometimes.

Interviewer: Oh, that's brilliant.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: I was wondering that it must be hard to get used to seeing them ...

Interviewee: Yeah, let them go you see because we get different every year this year now they'll be doing their exams next week and then they will be on holidays and then we won't get the next batch until October you know?

Interviewer: Yeah and in the gap do you miss ...

Interviewee: You miss them (positive tone of voice here).

Interviewer: Yeah, you miss them ...

Interviewee: You miss them.

Interviewer: That's lovely.

Interviewee: Because it brings the community together as well like you know?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: It gives us we have something to look forward to you know? So, it's good for them.

Interviewer: Yeah, I think for them as well it definitely raises their awareness if they are not normally around people from different generations ...

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: It definitely raises awareness.

Interviewee: There's people up there that are lonely as well and to bring them out of the house and get them going and more conversations and get that they look forward to that then.

Interviewer: And because it's an organised thing I wonder would you be in the community room if they weren't coming, is it kind of bringing people together that way as well that people are going out to specially meet the students?

Interviewee: The orderly above she does that she has morning coffee, coffee mornings you know? So, when we stop she takes on them and then she has coffee mornings too.

Interviewer: Ah, so you still meet then when the students ...

Interviewee: We don't, when they go, we don't meet. After next week now I suppose we won't start anything again until November again. So, we have outings then in between with S.H.A.R.E. And then we have coffee mornings and we sort of fill the gap up, we try, we try keep going.

Interviewer: Yeah, because it's nice to have something set ...

Interviewee: Set, yeah.

Interviewer: To do at this time. Especially if people are ... if you don't have somewhere to be and then as you said people might become isolated or get used to staying in which ... It's good to have a reason to be out.

Interviewee: Yeah, of course. To come out and meet people, yeah.

Interviewer: I think you know exactly what I ... I mean it really covers exactly what I'm wondering about. One of the things I thought of was technology. Because I know, I suppose, even I would be a bit above that generation where they are really all on their phones and all the social media and things. Is that something that they would tell you about or show you or would they ever explain about ... well I don't know you could be fantastic with technology or do you like technology, do you want to get to know how to use it?

Interviewee: Ah well sometimes I do but other times you know I have sort of have others interests outside it that I share as well you know. If they are sort of an ongoing thing like computers and things like that here you know?

Interviewer: Yeah something like if you wanted to fill out a form or something if you needed to online if you didn't know how to do something do you think maybe the students would they ...

Interviewee: They'd help. Yeah, they'd help.

Interviewee: Tis they helped with my phones. I got the touch phone and it was them who helped with it. They helped me with that. Yeah so, they are really good. And if I have a problem like I'll go to them and I'd say they are "*ah look here she comes again*", they don't mind though. I just say look how do you do this and they're very good with them, as you know.

Interviewer: Yeah, they are, it's second nature I think, they actually grew up ...

Interviewee: Yeah, they do grow up with them.

Interviewer: I remember when the phones came in when I was a teenager but the button ones, so it was when it switched over to the touch screen ones I had to kind of learn how to use it as opposed to ... they ... I suppose they have just grown up with it. They don't need anyone to teach them. They just figure it out.

Interviewee: Yeah, they just do.

Interviewer: And do you value that, I suppose, let's say the help with your touch phone?

Interviewee: Yeah, I do.

Interviewer: So, you find it useful?

Interviewee: Yeah, I can go to them and I could ask them anything, you know what I mean.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: I could go and that's a good feeling, as you can go and talk to them about things.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewer: And what do you talk to them about, would it be anything?

Interviewee: They would come back after the holidays and they say that where they were and you know and all that and how and they talk about S.H.A.R.E. as well, and how did we get into it you know.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: And we talk to them about that.

Interviewer: So, they are interested in that ...

Interviewee: Yeah, they are very interested. And how long are you here and all that so, you know ...

Interviewer: Yeah, and how long have you been in S.H.A.R.E.?

Interviewee: I think it's five years this year. The 14th of May I went in, I went in to S.H.A.R.E. And I'm there, I come down here, and I go ...

Interviewer: So, you make the trip down to see the students?

Interviewee: Yeah, once a week I make the trip down here as well. So, um and then I do the Wednesday up there every week.

Interviewer: So, you come down here for the day centre is it?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: And so, the students go to [Location] then don't they?

Interviewee: No, they're different, they are the same schools and things I suppose, but they come here and they ... I think they work for the week or something there are two a couple of weeks here. They do uh leaving. But I think the boys and girls up there, S.H.A.R.E. arranges that for them to come to us. You know if they want to come. And if we want to go with them. We said yes, like the four of us that's there, the four or five of us that's there. We said we'd go and we try and be encouraging the other ones but sometimes they come and sometimes they don't.

Interviewer: Yeah so, they are not sort of as set as the Wednesday visits then?

Interviewee: Yeah, sometimes they come and sometimes they don't.

Interviewer: So, the two students I saw downstairs they would be as you were saying the students coming in for the two weeks.

Interviewee: Yeah, they come in there for the two weeks. I met them now I'll meet them maybe next week now there might be two more. So, I meet them, and I play pool with them every week then.

Interviewer: Yeah, they look like they are enjoying the pool.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: And you're, do you know the students you meet on Wednesday would that be the same two every week for you?

Interviewee: No, they we have about 9 or ten (laughing). They all come to us.

Interviewer: So, you don't have sort of ...

Interviewee: Yeah, and they come on a Wednesday and the two here I only meet them once a week. And the same up there but I meet more of them. And there's more of them there's a group of them about 8 or 9 of them come. Boys and girls you know above. About 4 boys 5 girls.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: And they are quite happy, and they like it and we like it and we look forward to seeing them you know and chatting, so. And anything that we want to know, like, we can ask them anything, as you know like the technology, or the television, or anything we want to get on, or put on that we don't know about they'll do it, the music centre, and they will show you.

Interviewer: And would they show you how to use it yourself, so if you were let's say something with the television?

Interviewee: Yeah, they'd show you.

Interviewer: So, they show you, so then you could then, do it.

Interviewee: Yeah, they showed me how to, well I know how to, but once then the television didn't work, so they showed me on the other one, that I wasn't used to it, but I got used to that and they showed me the music centre as well. So, I know how to work that now as well.

Interviewer: Yeah, because I know it's one thing someone doing something for you but it's another if they are actually helping you so that you can do it yourself then you know.

Interviewee: Yeah, I can do it myself yeah, its handy to go through then if you have a problem they come in then and they do it.

Interviewer: They sound really helpful.

Interviewee: Oh, they are yeah, they are very good, really, they are very good.

Interviewer: That's nice I suppose sometimes you think you know about teenagers ...

Interviewee: Yeah, you have to have patience ...

Interviewer: That they mightn't always think of others always first?

Interviewee: Yeah, some of them women or men they probably don't have the time, it might irritate them, when I say that now they have, I mean they are teenagers now as you say, you know the way I mean we have all been there but as you get older I suppose you want to be more settled, you don't want shouting, screaming teenagers you know or anything like that. But a lot of them what we have now like, they are fine, and you know, so when they do come as I said the first, the next lot now, we get to know them, and they get to know us. And we take it from there, and you know they come and it's good to see them, like that because if they sat down with their notes just, you know, there would be nothing done.

Interviewer: There would be no point?

Interviewee: There would be no communication would there, so it's a healthy sign to see them jump in and getting on with us.

Interviewer: And do you find they are very talkative?

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah, they are yeah.

Interviewer: So, they really want to chat?

Interviewee: We, uh, we sometimes when we have a dance down in here they join in with us as well.

Interviewer: Oh, that sounds great.

Interviewee: Yeah, they are great fun, they are very good.

Interviewer: And you were saying you just talk about, I suppose, anything and everything, so they tell you about their holidays and things?

Interviewee: And you could ask them about their own thing and they tell you anyway you know when they come back after holidays and after mid-term break and everything you know? When they come back, they tell you.

Interviewer: So, they have lots of stories then?

Interviewee: Yeah, lots of stories then.

Interviewer: And, do you find you tell them much about you and your life? You were saying they asked about how you started with S.H.A.R.E. and things?

Interviewee: Oh, I would yeah. What we feel like we want to share ourselves like you know.

Interviewer: Yeah, so you are not kind of pushed, you don't have to share everything straight away.

Interviewee: No, they are very good, they don't push you.

Interviewer: And, do you find you share more with them as you get to know them? Do you feel more comfortable talking to them?

Interviewee: Yeah, I would yeah, I mean every year you know you are getting used to them you know coming like.

Interviewer: Even the process, yeah.

Interviewee: The process yeah, we do have time, the first or the second meeting. After the first meeting we're, you know, we're ok.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: We look forward to seeing them.

Interviewer: So, it just takes about two visits then?

Interviewee: Yeah, they are usually very good, you know, very understanding.

Interviewer: Yeah and do you feel like, I know you are saying you teach them, or that you're helping them with pool and things, so do you feel like they are kind of learning from you then?

Interviewee: Yeah, 'cause they come back and they say look I've just hit a ball down there you know (laughing). Did I do that right? And I says yeah that's very good, as long as you get it near the pocket you know, I'd be saying.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: That's good then, you know. We take them on our side and we play teams and we say you come on my side and they go to their side and that's how they interact then as well.

Interviewer: Because that's one of the things I was wondering was the students ... I was imagining, I'm sure they do actually benefit and learn from you, and so that's one thing would you say they learn other things, learn maybe from your past experiences?

Interviewee: I suppose they do. I don't know if they do or not. But they seem interested and sometimes I think, either they are doing at school, or copy say, they write sometimes about it you know?

Interviewer: Yeah, because sometimes it's nice maybe for them to know about, again I know, it's an over-focus on technology, but I think it must be so hard being a teenager now with all that technology.

Interviewee: All that, yeah.

Interviewer: Sometimes I think if you were telling them about when you were a teenager, you know, that it might be very refreshing for them. Would you agree that might be sort of a relief for them, or a break for them, from everything that's going on?

Interviewee: Yeah, you get you know in my day now they never had that (laughing). I dunno they will be sick of listening to it (laughing). In my day they didn't do that, in my day they didn't ... And then they like, oh yeah, tell us about it.

Interviewer: Yeah, because I think that might be a bit of relief for them to think that it's not all about this, people got by without.

Interviewee: Yeah, we had a life too one time.

Interviewer: Yeah, exactly and you probably enjoyed being, probably more being young without all that.

Interviewee: Yeah, we didn't have as much as them like you know so we were, we were fine, you know, with what we had.

Interviewer: Yeah, it is a bit of pressure on them and all that. It all comes back to the technology, I think.

Interviewer: What about S.H.A.R.E., is there anything, so, in S.H.A.R.E. there is a big focus on this on the intergenerational activity, is there anything you think they should improve on or expand on? You know, do you think they should push it further, as it's just a Wednesday now

do you think that they should expand on it or do you think that it's the right mix the way it is now?

Interviewee: Well, with their holidays now and their exams, I don't think so. I think they should have that time. I don't think, push them too much you know. They are satisfied with what they are doing now and not to push em further like, you know, oh come back in your holidays and that, no, I don't think that, I wouldn't think so.

Interviewer: Yeah, I think it's a good mix, yeah.

Interviewee: Yeah, I think the way it is, because you might overflow the cup, as they say, you know (laughing). They might lose interest so it's just nice now the way it is. They have their time and we have our time. And we have time together. And that's nice.

Interviewer: Yeah, it's a good mix then?

Interviewee: It's a good mix, yeah.

Interviewer: And would you have any other, I suppose, for S.H.A.R.E. is there anything that you wanted to see or felt was needed? I mean it seems everything runs very well here. Is there anything that you are missing or that you need from S.H.A.R.E. that you're not maybe getting or is there anything that you love that they do that you would like to see more of?

Interviewee: On a Wednesday if they could get involved more with you know ... Give us more, they leave tea and everything, but sometimes you run short of biscuits and milk, they could put a little bit more in, and then maybe we can get the other residents to come you know. If we get, coax em, with a bit of sandwich and once we get them over then like.

Interviewer: Do you mean some of the residents might not come and take part, but they might if there was a bit more to entice them?

Interviewee: Yeah, more variety for them, yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, if it was a bit different.

Interviewee: Yeah, encourage them, yeah.

Interviewer: I suppose, if you are doing coffee mornings already, it's just a bit different.

Interviewee: They always come to that. But when it comes to this, you know, we have maybe four or five, but Sarah²⁷ would get maybe sixteen or eighteen of them you know?

Interviewer: Yeah, so there is a higher turnout to the coffee mornings?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: So, they could work on ...

Interviewee: Yeah, we need to work on that to get more residents.

Interviewer: And really get the benefit from it then, yeah.

Interviewee: Yeah, get the benefit from it, now not all the residents now would come but if you get the majority you know, out of the house.

Interviewer: Yeah, something to kind of encourage them ...

Interviewee: Encourage them, yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, definitely.

Interviewer: So maybe you think sandwiches would be...

Interviewee: Sandwiches, yeah, and drinks then, yeah, well we do have tea and coffee so other drinks, lemonade or something. If there is a variety that they can choose from, you know?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: I think that would encourage them.

Interviewer: Yeah, a bit more variety.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: That sounds very good.

Interviewer: It would be good ...

Interviewee: I mean November now, by the time the other group would come.

²⁷ Name changed to protect identity.

Interviewer: So, you're not talking about the in-between period, you're talking about next year.

Interviewee: Next year, yeah, when the other group would come.

Interviewer: And did you say apart from getting in sandwiches, would you say maybe some new activities, I can't think of anything off the top of my head, but something that might bring more residents, do you think there is any kind of ... Would bingo or something, would that ...

Interviewee: Yeah, we have bingo, see but the balls are very small. We have trouble with them. They're falling down from the table, we should get a more mature set a set of balls, and things like that, for bingo. We do bingo. They like bingo.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: And we do um ...

Interviewer: So, just maybe updating it.

Interviewee: We do surprises, sweets and things, you know, for bingo. Presents and things for getting a full house you know, so that's keeping the interest as well.

Interviewer: Sorry, did you say they did have little presents?

Interviewee: I bring sweets, I bring a bag of sweets. They get a bar, with a full house, they get a full chocolate bar, or things or fruit, or anything.

Interviewer: Yeah, bingo is good fun, it's not something I think they would play unless they were coming in and its good fun, it's not like the organised sports that would be organised in schools or anything, so they might not get to play that, if they weren't ...

Interviewee: They can play Ludo and games and things like that, we have them above as well, if they wanted to play.

Interviewer: Are there any other activities you'd like to see?

Interviewee: They could dance, get them out dancing. I love music (laughing).

Interviewer: What kind of music do you like?

Interviewee: Well I'm in to, I like country and western.

Interviewer: Oh, that's interesting.

Interviewee: Any country and western, but I think it's good to get them up and moving, you know?

Interviewer: I think so yeah, it's good for everyone.

Interviewee: Yeah, sitting down all day ... up (laughing)!

Interviewer: It's great.

Interviewee: Yeah, it's great for them.

Interviewer: And if the students maybe got more involved in the dancing?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Or are they at that awkward age, to do it?

Interviewee: Yeah, they do, I have no problem getting them up.

Interviewer: Ah ok, so it's more the residents ...

Interviewee: Yeah, they (the students) they like it, they like it.

Interviewer: Yeah, so that's an interesting point. So, to encourage that.

Interviewee: So, as we have the music, something we might as well get CDs and get it going.

Interviewer: Yeah, so maybe more, a bigger selection, a wider selection of music maybe?

Interviewee: What I done last year, I got a group together, Christmas day, and I said look we go over and we have, we can have our dinner and things over there for Christmas day. See, because even people are sitting alone in a house, you know? I said come up, about 4 uh we ended up with 10 after ... 10 of them came, yeah 10. By the afternoon we had 10, in the evening. We finished then I'd say, we finished at 6, started from about 12 on, down til 6. Yeah that, cos the day is very boring Christmas day like, when you ...

Interviewer: Yeah, especially if you are just at home it's great to have something organised to go to ...

Interviewee: Yeah, they came in and they listened to music and they had a chat and they had dinner and sandwiches, or whatever they wanted, and their tea and things. So, I thought that went well.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Yeah, we'll try that again might do it again this year now, you know?

Interviewer: Yeah, and try, would your aim be maybe to try and get more people?

Interviewee: Get more yeah, yeah, we had a good turnout, so I didn't expect that much but we did, we had a good turnout.

Interviewer: So really, I think one of the biggest issues I think, it seems all the services are running very well, with things available, the biggest issue seems to be encouraging people to take part, and how do you do that, I suppose.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: How do you get more people to even try it?

Interviewee: Yeah, you can't force them you know.

Interviewer: Yeah exactly, I'm sure once people tried ...

Interviewee: You can bring the horse to the well, but you can't make it drink the water (laughing).

Interviewer: Yeah, but I would think once people try it they would probably love it, not everyone, but I think the majority.

Interviewee: Yeah (unsure sounding), you don't know until you have tried things, yeah.

Interviewer: Fear of the unknown, maybe?

Interviewee: Yeah, listen I'm game for anything. I'd try anything. And if I don't like it or I like it, you know.

Interviewer: Yeah, but you can't know if you don't try, yeah.

Interviewee: Yeah, you must try that's right, yeah.

Interviewer: Do you think that there's a reason ...

Interviewee: Yeah stop thinking about yourself, get up and go (laughing).

Interviewer: And, do you think there is something blocking them from getting out and going?

Interviewee: Yeah, you know, and then they go into depression, and all this, you know, and they wonder why then, you know, 'cause they have too much time, and they are thinking too much.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Whereas if they are out they wouldn't be thinking that much you know?

Interviewer: Exactly, yeah, because the worse you feel the less you want to do something until you do it and then you're ...

Interviewee: Then you're fine, yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, you're out of your head and you don't have time to be thinking, yeah.

Interviewee: Yeah, I think that's right.

Interviewer: It's just a bit of distraction I think and ...

Interviewee: Yeah, it's a little bit like, a little goes a long way with them, you know?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: And the boys and girls they have great patience about them as well, I can see they do. They do interact, and they do talk, you know?

Interviewer: Yeah, so maybe it's fear of the unknown?

Interviewee: Yeah, and then there's people that don't want to talk then, and you just have to work around them, I suppose.

Interviewer: Yeah, and maybe after a while they come out of their shell, but even if someone was to sit there and maybe not engage but to just be around what was going on?

Interviewee: Be around yeah, be there like, you know? And they don't have to ...

Interviewer: They don't have to exactly.

Interviewee: They can just be there and that means a lot to them like so just to be there. It is a start to get them out of themselves.

Interviewer: Exactly.

Interviewee: Once they get used to you then sort of come around again and you can't shut them up then (laughing). So, I think that's a really great idea.

Interviewer: Yeah, that's great feedback I think.